

# Bitter Sweet <sup>75¢</sup>

February, 1979 *The Magazine of Maine's Hills & Lakes Region* Vol. 2, No. 4



**Ezra Stephens: Trap Corner Showman**  
**February: Maine is Forever**  
**First-ever Reader Survey**



Dear Peter- 2:19

The other day I was out on Mud Pond ice fishin'—just a sittin' an' a watchin' my traps. Pretty soon one of my flags flew up. In rushin' to git there I slipped an' fell into one of my fish holes. I was a thrashin' an' a splashin' down there when I spied this light up above. Well I shot right up an' came right into this fish house. You should of seen that fella's eyes. I was pretty cold an' that fella's stove looked pretty good. Why I grabbed that stove with a firm bear hug. It got pretty hot right off. Why I flung that stove. It spilled hot ashes all over his fish house. Pretty soon things got hot. Why that ole fish house, ax, traps, shovel, bucket, fry pan, his boots an' mittens all went up in flames. Awful Mess.

—Bert



Dear Bert—

We have some excellent stoves which would fit a fish house, TINGLE boots and gloves to replace his, as well as axes, shovels, buckets, and frying pans. WE HAVE MORE.

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Bert, I think it's best if you keep off the ice or tie a two by four around your waist.


—Peter.



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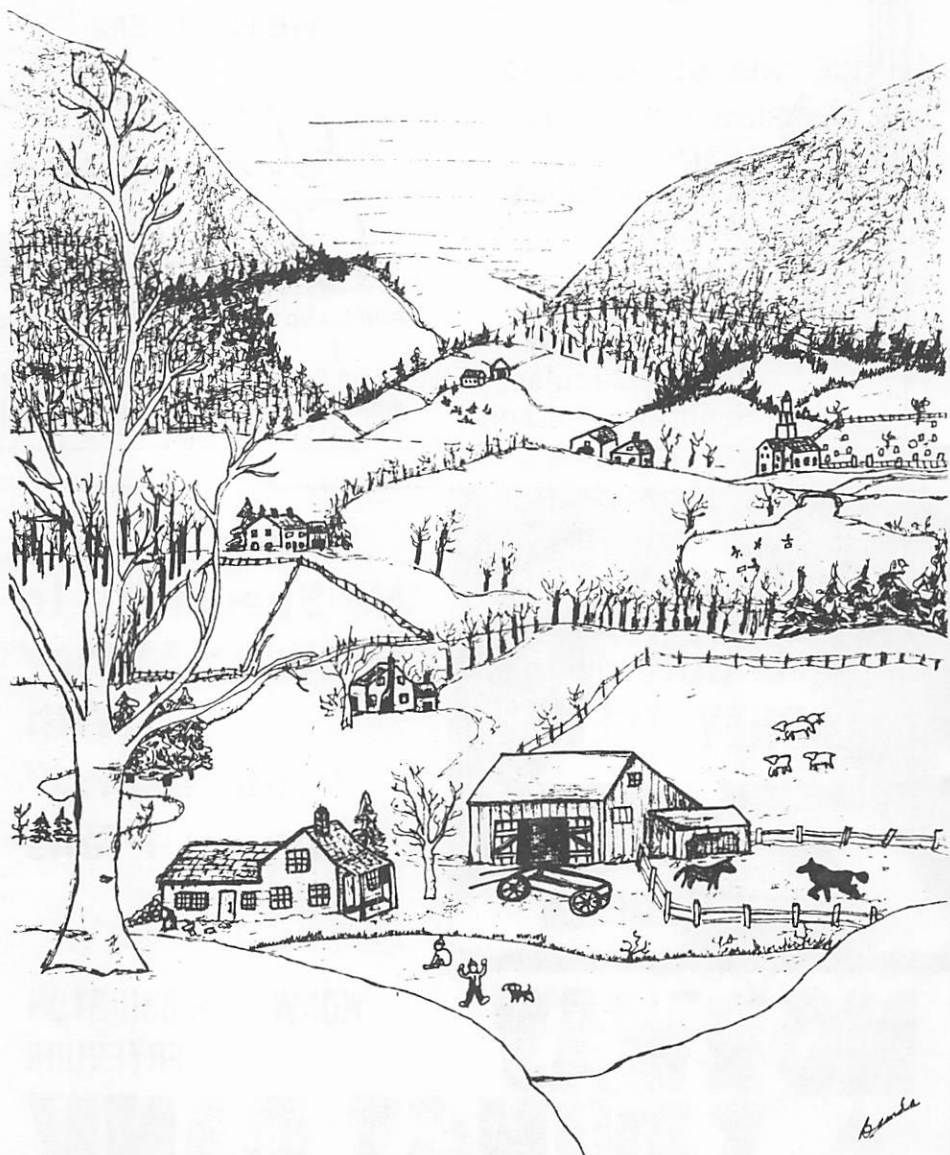


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# BitterSweet Views

## February is the month for filling in forms

The seed catalogues which arrive daily are brimming with pictures of beautifully fresh-ripened vegetables, only an order-blank away.

Mail-order houses send tempting spring and summer editions showing the latest in camping gear and warm weather fashions, ours for the asking simply by placing an order.

Even Uncle Sam has provided us with a list to fill in by each April 15.

So, **BitterSweet** has come up with a form of its own, which we hope you'll manage to fit in between the spaghetti squash, the new

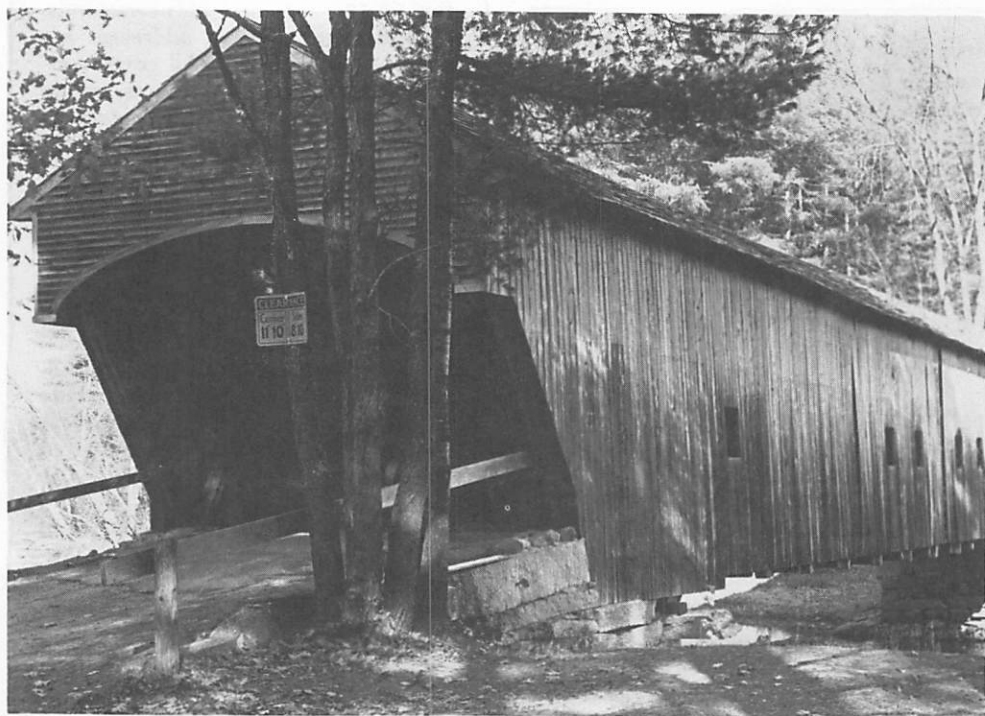
blouse, and the cussed income tax. If the readership response to **The BitterSweet Survey** (see centerfold) is anywhere near as lively as the staff debate surrounding its production, it should provide us with some fun in the months ahead.

I suppose a survey is, by its very nature, controversial. What's considered probing by some is bound to be seen as prying by others. There were those on the staff who were offended at the idea that we would ask readers anything at all about their private lives, let alone whether they owned their own car, and how much they made for a living. We were asking for trouble, they warned, bound to raise the ire of a group of people famous for the stock it places in its privacy.

---

Mrs. Vernon McFarlin of South Paris called to tell us last month's **Can You Place It?** showed the William B. Royal wheelbarrow mill on Stony Brook in South Paris, which was operated by her great grandfather. Many of the wheelbarrows manufactured there were shipped west during the California goldrush. So far as Mrs. McFarlin knows, none of them remain anywhere in these parts.

The photo was submitted by Mrs. Belle Ames Lavorgna, South Paris, who identified the mills as the old F. C. Merrill Iron Foundry, and the Royal grist, carriage and wheelbarrow mills. Dan Morse and Thom Bourgoise, both of South Paris, also identified the mills, as well as Donald Tash, Naples.



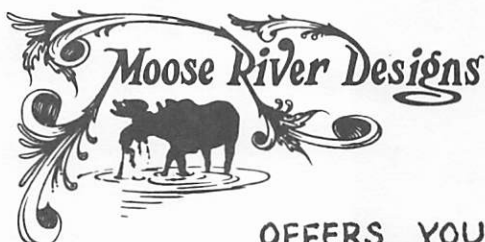


Not so, said others, some of whom were of that very native stock which was supposed to be so stand-offish. If people realized that the information was necessary to plan future magazines, there might be no objections, they agreed. In fact, folks might actually think the survey was fun—something to pass a dreary February evening—particularly since the answers would be anonymous and the results, once tabulated, would be published for all to enjoy.

Whether they supported the idea of a survey or not, all agreed that perhaps the one thing that has made *BitterSweet* the small hit that it has been so far is the fact that people take the magazine personally. That may mean they'll be willing to tell us a little more than usual about themselves. Or, it may mean they'll take the whole thing so to heart that they'll be very perturbed.

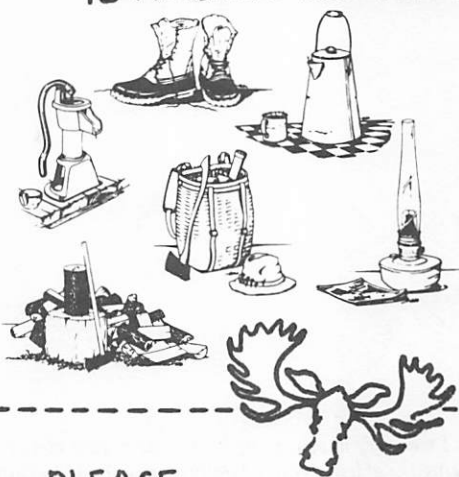
Either way, we're hoping that we'll hear from readers, even if it's just to tell us the whole idea of a survey is for the birds. We obviously think the idea has merit, though, and are hoping that enough of you will agree to make it a success. What we're after is simply a way to find out who is reading the magazine, what they like and dislike about it, and how we can improve on what we're doing both in terms of advertising and editorial content. If there's another way to do that besides running a survey, we'd be happy to hear that, too.

*Sandy Wilhelm*



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# My Journey West

by Evelyn Day

In the White Mountains of New Hampshire, in the vicinity of Crawford Notch, the Saco River has its beginnings. My mother told her children of going there and stepping across the river on stones. The story was of great interest to us since our home in Sebago was quite far removed from any river.

In its journey to the sea the river is joined by many smaller rivers and brooks until it reaches what is now the city of Saco. Villages and small towns have been built up on its banks: the Conways, Fryeburg, Brownfield, and Hiram among others. A popular pastime today is to put canoes in at Brownfield, near the Brownfield-Denmark bridge, and float or paddle down to Hiram, taking the canoes out near Cotton's Store at the bridge which separates Hiram from East Hiram.

It was to this little town of East Hiram that Evelyn Douglas went as Roy Archibald's bride in December, 1921. The following is a story of a part of their life.

*I was very happy in our little home in East Hiram. Being the oldest girl in a family of nine, I had learned how to cook and do all housekeeping chores; so it was a joy to do all things in our own house.*

*Roy was not well. This bothered me a great deal. He and Ralph Warren ran a trucking business. They were two of the first people to pick up orders at stores in Brownfield, Hiram, and surrounding areas, and travel to Portland picking up goods and making deliveries. They also got many things for the summer*

*camp. Business was increasing. Roads at that time, 1922, were not very good. Roy had a Ford Truck and Ralph a Reo. Both knew that, in the future, the trucking business would be extensive—even in winter. To consider driving a truck to Portland in winter after snow came was then judged foolhardy by the older people.*

*Long hours and heavy lifting took their toll on Roy's slight body, which was not too strong to begin with. When Uncle George Chaplin came to Maine from*





*House-car in which the Archibalds made the trip from West Baldwin, Maine to Baldwin Park, California*



*October 8, 1923: the author's mother, Bertha Douglas with Erwin (now a doctor in Missouri) on the day the Archibalds left Maine*

California to work one summer, he visited us. In fact, he stayed a week or two. His work as a steeplejack kept him. (He painted the smoke stacks on various mills: a lumber mill in Hiram, the South Hiram bobbin mill, and others.) It was his influence that started us thinking of going to California. Because of the warmer climate, we thought Roy's health would be better.

About the middle of the summer, Roy sold out his interest in trucking and built a house on the Ford truck. On October 8, 1923, the day after our son Erwin was

a year old, we started for California. Gram Archibald was with us. How we existed and got across country in the conveyance, I'll never know. In the front end of the house-car, Roy had built a sturdy frame for a bedspring. This was where I slept nights with Erwin. Gram and I took turns during the days riding there in and in the front seat.

Often we stopped early to camp overnight so we could all get some much-needed exercise. There were interesting things to see on the journey: the geography

of the land and rivers, the farms and animals all claimed our attention. Eventually we reached St. Louis and well do I recall how thrilling it was to see where the muddy Missouri joined the Mississippi on its way to the sea.

As I look again at the map of our great country, it seems more than ever like a dream that we traveled across it in our humble conveyance. I failed to mention that the precious china dishes, which my mother had given me, were packed in a barrel with newspaper and straw. Roy had fastened a heavy metal band around the barrel to hold it firmly in place. A board was placed on top. This served as a sort of a table in preparing our meagre meals. But our cooking was done mostly outside, over campfires.

Because we didn't keep any record of towns and cities, I'm unable to definitely trace our trip. But I do remember it was near Chester, Illinois, on the wide, black mud of river-bottom-land on the Mississippi that the house-car really bogged down. Roy went to a farm for help. Some young farmers with a pair of colts and a pair of mules hauled us for twelve miles.

We crossed Missouri, a corner of Oklahoma, and the Arkansas River near Little Rock, Arkansas. Then we went on to Red River and the town of Texarkana, which is so named for being on the border of Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana. We had planned to stop a little while in Big Springs, Texas, as some of Roy's people lived there. We were in the big state of Texas

upon leaving Texarkana.

The roads were far from good, generally speaking. We passed through long miles of Texas fences built up wide with tumbleweeds. It was windy and many times the weeds would blow over the fences and go on their wild way. Bogart hedges formed many of the fences, and much of the land was unfenced. I recall seeing many acres of land, white with alkali, which is poisonous to creatures.

We spent Thanksgiving in Big Springs. I suppose we must have rested a great deal. However, my best recollections are of meeting a lot of people and of their getting me to talk and laughing at my way of speaking. But it wasn't one-sided. I could hardly understand them. This I hadn't prepared myself for. Everything was strange and it was a different world, but there was no use giving in to homesickness.

It seemed the best road would take us to El Paso by way of the Pecos River Valley. The roads through the Pecos Valley were built up on levees. It had been raining and still rained. We met several cars and got past by the skin of our teeth. Then, the inevitable: a car, which looked very big, came toward us and we, forced to drive too close to the edge of the road, started sliding in that clay down the side of the levee. Some brush and dwarfed trees kept us from tipping over. I didn't dare to stay in the truck, but found a seat on a rock or stump and, putting Erwin inside of a heavy sweater, sat in the rain and waited. I don't recall what Gram did, but



Near Chester, Illinois  
the Baker brothers pulled the  
house-car out of the mud with  
a pair of colts and a pair of mules



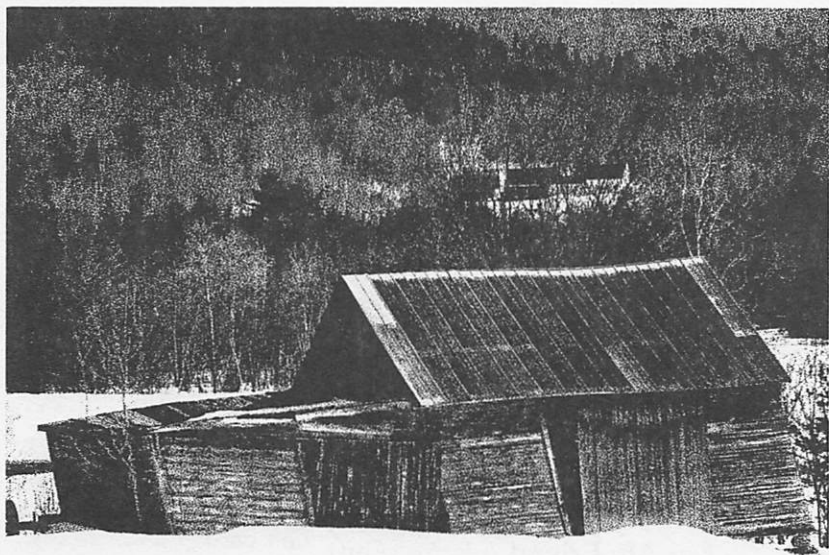


Photo by Bill Haynes

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think she stayed in the truck. Roy had to walk several miles to get men and a heavy truck to put us on the road again.

Within a day or so we were at Pecos. Although it hadn't been really cold, exposure to the rain and dampness had brought a cold and fever to Erwin.

The anxiety we all felt! No camping out now—we've got rooms at a small and very comfortable little home. The Doctor pronounced bronchial pneumonia. I prayed constantly that our little boy would not be taken from us. I shall never forget those days and the many kindnesses of the robust German woman whose home we were in. She took good care of us. Around her house were many little items which we knew had come from across the sea. I recall comforters on our beds filled with feathers.

After about two weeks, the doctor gave permission for us to travel on. During this time, Roy had the truck at a garage, overhauling and preparing the best he could for the difficult trip over the mountains of "The Great Divide." Somewhere about this time, Roy suggested putting us on a train, sending us on to California and driving alone for the remainder of the trip. This didn't sound good to any of us, so we continued on together.

Eventually we reached El Paso. Here we stopped and rested at the home of a cousin of Roy's. She was a teacher and had never been East. Our way then took us across a corner of New Mexico into Arizona, more hilly and mountainous all the way. I recall the towns of Douglas and Bisbee and by way of Tucson and Phoenix north to Flagstaff. This was a long, tedious trip but the way the road led us.

As we approached Flagstaff, the road was in a canyon and we wondered if the truck would pass through the narrow, crooked street without hitting the rocky canyon walls on either side. This was a mining town, with little homes built on the mountainsides. I recall we were told that almost a solid mountain of copper ore was being dug away.

We had been stopping for meals occasionally at small restaurants since leaving the semi-desert land and traveling in the hills. So it was that we had breakfast in Flagstaff. The weather promised snow and people were doubtful that we would be able to cross the mountain, which seemed to be one of a vast range. But what could we do but go on?

The road wound to and fro, up and up—on one side almost perpendicular cliff. On the other I could look down and see the winding road over which we had come—miles of it. In a great many places there were no railings. Other cars, six to ten of them, were struggling on ahead of us. As we got nearer the top, in an especially difficult spot, the drivers all helped one another until we were at last going, in a line, down grade. In due time, the mountains were somewhat less steep; we had crossed "The Great Divide." I recall

feeling separated from East and home.

The road took us southwest through Gila Bend Mountains, along Gila River, through desert country to Yuma, where we crossed the state line into California.

The Imperial Valley, which I believe is a vast garden area, and a part of the San Bernadino mountains lay between us and Los Angeles. Baldwin Park, where Uncle George lived, was a small town just east of the city. We were welcomed to his house, where he lived with a grown son, David.

Very soon, Roy bought a small house nearby and signed a contract to pay thirty dollars a month rent, applied as payment on the place. He sold the house-car and got a Ford sedan. What a comfort it was to have a roof over our heads again—a humble little house with a wide porch. Many fruit trees grew in the yard, among them a fig tree and some saucer peaches which I had never seen.

Roy got work with a plumber, but illness kept him from holding his job. After a while he drove a school bus for a few weeks, but he became so weak and ill, a doctor sent him to Los Angeles County Hospital. I still recall with heartbreak his looking up at me and saying, "Do you know where they have me? In a T.B. Ward."

Through the kindness of neighbors at Baldwin Park, he was finally taken to Banning Sanitorium at Riverside, California—a dry climate on the edge of the desert. He failed to respond to treatment, however, and on May, 2, 1924, he left us.

Gram and I and the baby had been living on the premises and helping care for Roy, doing kitchen work and laundry to partly pay our way.

I obtained some books for the library, with the thought of teaching in California, but with the care of Erwin (who was my life-saver), and all the adjustments to be made, letters from Maine turned my thoughts in the right direction. In October I returned to my girlhood home, the farm in Sebago, welcomed by my parents and brothers and sisters. No words can ever express my gratitude for this haven of rest.

People asked me how I liked California. I didn't. With so much anxiety and sorrow, it was much better to be back in Maine.

A school superintendent, Celia Sanborn, had written to me that she had a school waiting for me. I had previously taught several years before being married. So train tickets had been obtained over many objections from Gram and then I had come home to Maine with my little boy.

Mrs. Day, a resident of South Hiram, taught school for thirty three years, and is now retired.

# EZRA STEPHENS: Yankee Trader & Circus Man



About the time the railroad found its way to North Paris in the early 1800's, Ezra Stephens was born, and he lived with his parents in Paris, near Trap Corner. From his birth he was a marked figure in the town. He was a true Yankee trader from his first breath. It was as natural for him to trade as it was to breathe. No man can remember the time when Ezra was not trading watches or swapping jackknives. In school or out, at home or abroad, he was forever following his instinct. With a few old watches and a pocket full of jackknives, he was soon launched upon his career.

Very early in his life he began to peddle. His first equipment consisted of two tin trunks with huge padlocks. These were filled with his motley wares. One trunk contained hooks and eyes, buttons, threads, needles—in short, everything that appealed to the desires of the backwoods housewife. The other was filled with "Attleboro jewelry," watches, knives, combs, cheap rings, and

other strange things, which could be converted into cash by the Yankee trader.

Ezra possessed a remarkable figure. Tall, broad-shouldered, deep-chested and with huge limbs, he gave evidence in every motion of the wonderful strength which he possessed. His well-known tin trunks could be seen upon every road in the county. In winter he added to his equipment the familiar post-and-beam sled of his own construction. Upon the sled, well-secured to strong maple stakes thrust through the beams, were the two tin trunks. Ezra's stalwart form supplied the motive power.

Upon his head he always wore a remarkable hat or cap, which was the most striking thing about him (and which could be seen for long distances). Around his neck he wore several yards of a knit "comforter" adapted to the changing climate. His hands were encased in an enormous pair of mittens of singular construction. In coldest weather his feet and legs were adorned with red leggings, which could also be seen from far

away, and which foretold his travels.

His vest was a curious construction. He was always partial to loud colors, large checks and plaids—a taste which found its highest development in the marvelous vest. His clothes, invariably constructed after his own ideas, were of ample size and length with pockets in every conceivable place, attached to all sorts of watchguards—from the primitive trace chain to the 18-karat-fine gold variety. At the end of the chains were pockets filled with watches in every stage of decomposition, and ancient jackknives ever ready for trade.

One peculiarity of Ezra's was that he never hurried. He was a welcome guest at every fireside. His frugal meals and lodging were paid for from the little trunks always at hand. For hours he would remain in the farmer's kitchen, surrounded by an admiring audience. His patience and good nature were inexhaustible. With his peculiar drawl, he would tell stories, sing songs, and keep his hearers amused for hours. He rarely failed to trade with the good housewife, to sell gaudy jewelry to the young man, or to "swap" watches or jackknives with the "old man"—of whom he was sure to obtain plenty of boot!

He acquired in some way the knowledge of repairing clocks and watches. Rarely did he go from the farmer's door without hauling away the family watches and clocks upon his sleds for repairs. He was everybody's friend. His word was law among the farmers. He

drove a thriving trade and kept his money.

He was also the owner of a pair of gaunt and stalwart fox hounds, which were his constant companions over the country roads. He began to carry a rifle with his trunks and became an expert fox hunter. This sport was the only one that would divert him from his little trunks and business. Hearing the sounds of his dogs and the fox in the distance, he would quickly deposit his trunks and sled with a trusty neighbor and, at a swift pace, set out to follow his dogs. He would almost invariably say with a drawl, "By goll, he's got to come down!"

It was the good price of the skins, as well as the sport, that tempted Ezra from his business. It was no uncommon sight to see the well-known sled, its trunks adorned with bloody fox skins, being pulled rapidly behind the picturesque Ezra, toward Trap Corner.

Here he opened a country store. "Ezra's" was as well-known in the area as the depot, the blacksmith shop, or the gristmill. It was at "Ezra's" that spare coppers found their way into Ezra's money drawer for crackers and cheese or raisins and salt-fish. Meanwhile, the patient horses were hitched outside with their bridles off, to eat "post-meat" and grain, or "chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy."

Ezra always had some amusement ready, either in the shape of violin or banjo, with negro songs and melodies; or had some strange animal—monkey, parrot or fox—securely fastened about his wonderful store-yard. He was ever ready to trade anything from the delapidated knife and watch in your pocket to the old mare in the shafts or the homespun suit on your back. He would buy, at some price, everything brought to his store from spruce gum to a Chickering piano.

Of his career as a showman I can say very little as he developed in this direction after our early acquaintance. This phase of his career was well illustrated and told in the *Lewiston Journal* at the time of his decease (see box).

Eventually, Ezra moved to Bryant's Pond, where he built another one of his characteristic stores in the center of the village. This place became even more celebrated than his famous Trap Corner store; here his ideas found full development.

While trading at Bryant's Pond, he had as one of his queer companions a monkey of

---

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I can give you trinkets of a day  
And sculpt my thoughts like statues of my love  
For you. And you display them on a tray  
So hardened figurines my love will prove.

I can form the semblance of my flesh  
In likeness of my hands, my heart, my lips  
For you. The parts of me will intermesh  
And you can have the whole of me in strips.

I can warm them. Gentle hands have I  
To stroke them softly and to make them shine  
For you. Warm before you they will lie,  
Molded truly down to every line.

I can put some playthings on a shelf  
For you. But never can I cast myself.

*Sally Clay  
Hiram*



uncertain years—a great favorite of Ezra's. The monkey disappeared and was hunted for in every direction. Nearly a week later, his owner had occasion to go into his store-room. He lifted the heavy cover from the barrel of sugar and out jumped the gaunt favorite. "By Goll! If here ain't my goll-darned monk! Been gone four days!"

The anecdotes of Ezra Stephens would fill a volume. I have room for but one or two:

One dark night, riding upon the Boston & Maine to Portland, I fell asleep in my revolving-seat. The rain was pouring down in torrents when I awoke. In the dim light, looking out the rear door of the car was a familiar figure, which I had not seen for years. The hat was unmistakable. My ears were saluted with a familiar sound: "Purty dark out thar. By Goll!" It was Ezra himself, who talked to me for an hour.

As a young man peddling among the farmers, it was Ezra's custom to take orders for strange goods for future delivery. One winter's day in Greenwood, he stopped at a farmer's house, whose smart daughter

worked far away in the mills at Biddeford and was home for a visit. The overgrown peddler afforded the young woman an opportunity to show her superiority over the "greenhorn." This was during the rage of the so-called "Grecian Bend." Tossing Ezra's wares aside, the daughter scornfully said, "I don't want none of them, 'ere, but if yer had a Grecian Bend with shoulder straps, I'd trade with yer."

"By Goll!" Ezra drawled out, "tell yer what I'll dew, give me yer dimensions, and I'll bring yer one next time I come 'round. By Goll!"

Ezra Stephens was famous all over the state. Not to know Ezra was to be ignorant indeed. His well-known figure, dressed in checkered pants, plaid vest, and showy gaiters, his tall person surmounted by the well-known white beaver hat set at an acute angle, were as familiar as Tavern, Mount Christopher, or the Rumford stage. His abilities, although eccentric, were beyond those of ordinary men.

## EZRA STEPHENS' FATAL MISTAKE\*

With Ezra Stephens went almost the last of the old-time showmen. With Ezra Stephens went all the quaintness of the old days of the tan bark and the sawdust ring.

He was not only the Barnum of Maine, but he was also the wit of the country, the inimitable tale-spinner, the relator of wonderful adventures, the raconteur of wonderful fox hunts.

The store that he has kept at Bryant's Pond since his retirement from the circus arena is the most remarkable old curiosity shop in Maine and is the talk of everyone who has ever been here to see it. And haven't all the folks in the state heard of the man who invented the only dancing turkeys that ever entertained a large and refined audience?\*

That was Ezra Stephens!

His physique was one of his remarkable features. He stood 6'2" and his frame was massive. You would note him in any throng. He always wore a particular large stove-pipe hat, even when he went out hunting. That hat was the badge of his attachment to the "sarcus." It was the article of dress that remarked: "Here is the Phineas Taylor Barnum of Maine. Here is the educator of wonderful and refined dancing turkeys, the exhibitor of the translated crocodiles, the proprietor of the wonder-compelling sea

Page 13...

\*reprinted from the July 8, 1899 **Lewiston Journal**

\*\*He was supposed to have placed the turkeys on some kind of a stove, and as the lids became hot, the birds would dance

serpent, the manager of the rhodian mystery, and the only perfecter of the giant South American Cockatoo."

Ah, there was only one Ezra, and Bryant's Pond had him.

The older people say that, at the door of his tent in the old days, his huge voice with its rolling diapason was something to force the throngs in under his canvas. Here was one of Ezra's favorite exordiums:

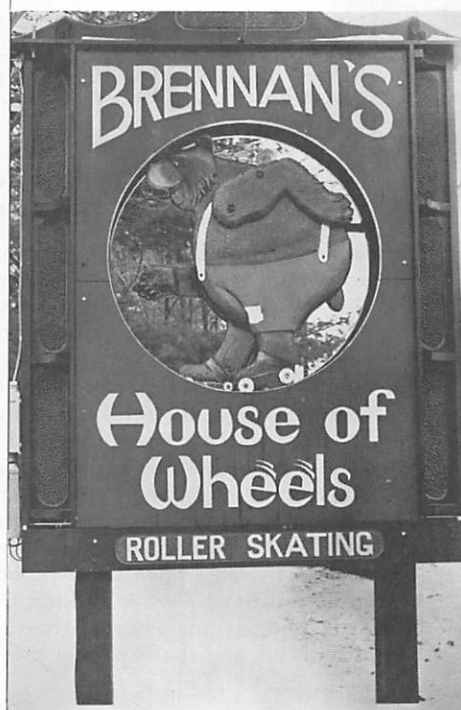
Now, ladies and gentlemen, my distinguished fellow citizens, future presidents and millionaires, listen to me. At great expense we have here collected under this canvas a stupendous aggregation of all that in nature delights the eye and stirs the human soul to wonder and amazement. Through the dark, dank jungles of distant Africa and across the mighty mountains of the West have sped the emissaries in search of attractions for this great exhibition that is now ready for your inspection. Let me tell you that there is nothing within that can offend the most fastidious. There is nothing except what can attract and elevate. Lead in your dear children by the hands, ye guardians and ye parents. Bring in your children and the children of other people. Come in, even if you have no children. No saucy questions will be asked. Here, under this pure white canvas you and those of your family can learn more of the animal kingdom, of the beauties and wonders of nature that surround us, than they can in years at the public schools. We have here the fierce and sagacious tyrant of the mountains and the forest, the great American bear, but recently dragged from its feasts of blood to appear before your astonished eyes. We have here the translated crocodile from the banks of the Nile and other wonders of the far East. Come in, good people. You will see here things that you can tell to your children when you are old. You will here see things that they can never see for themselves, for this is the only opportunity of a lifetime.

And Ezra would have to desist and go make a change.

Ask Ezra Stephens how long he had been in the show business, and he would tell you that he guessed that he was born in it. He always had a taste for it. He used to run a show for pins in the old days—60 years ago.

"Great Scott," he used to say, "I remember how that first circus that I ever saw took hold of me. That was 60 years ago. The show came to Dixfield and I went. You bet I did! That was the first circus that I ever

Page 36...



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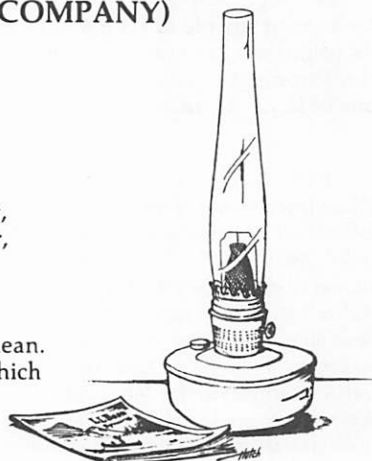
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# Recollections

## THE KEROSENE LAMP (or ODE TO THE POWER COMPANY)

I remember the days of my youth long ago  
 When the light was a flicker instead of a glow  
 And my eyes would itch and water and cramp  
 From trying to read by the kerosene lamp.  
 If the light was turned up, and this is no joke,  
 The chimney turned black from excessive smoke.  
 On Saturday morn, though I might have a 'drather,  
 All the lamps to the kitchen for cleaning, I'd gather,  
 I'd wash up each chimney and trim up each wick,  
 Fill each lamp with oil and hope it did the trick  
 Of lasting all week on the same kerosene,  
 The wick would burn even and the chimney stay clean.  
 That's all in the past now, those "good old days" which  
 I recall with nostalgia while flicking the switch.  
 Now, today, one thing's harder than having to fill  
 Lamps with oil, and that's paying the bill!



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**and SON**



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# MAINE IS FOREVER

by Inez Farrington

## Chapter 2

**FEBRUARY** is some improvement over January in that the days get longer, the sun warmer—and we can count the days to town meeting. The struggle with storms and cold weather still goes on, and the colds in your head grow worse. It is the month for winter carnivals and Valentine parties, the month when a snow queen reigns for a day and sometimes a week-end in every town that has a high school or a carnival.

The ceremony, crowning a snow queen, is a beautiful one but if the crowning is done out of doors, the audience suffers from cold feet and stinging ears. I imagine the queen is none too comfortable, but as she poses for the press and sometimes even for the governor of the state, she manages to keep her teeth from chattering too loud behind her gracious smile.

February is also the month for sleet storms, not quite cold enough for snow and too cold for rain. So we get frozen sleet! We cannot walk or ride and even planes are grounded. It freezes on car windshields and running boards so you can neither get in a car nor see out of it. Huge trucks sand the roads with a mixture of sand and salt, but it doesn't help much while it still storms.

It is a nerve-wracking experience to get caught miles from home in a sleet storm. I sit with clenched hands and watch trees and telephone poles come toward me. The car goes into a spin while I wait with closed eyes, picturing the car smashed and the family in the hospital. But the crash seldom comes, for we get to be experts at this kind of driving, and if it does come it is not likely to do much damage while the huge snowbanks act as a

bumper. It just means pushing, shoveling, and putting on chains to get out. Hills are an obstacle which seem almost impossible to overcome, but we always manage to get up. On every hill you find a number of cars which got there first but are making slow progress. With much pushing, falling down and skinning of knees, and mouthing of pertinent remarks, the cars go up one by one.

Sleet is dangerous and troublesome in a city, but in lonely districts it can prove to be a tragedy. Homes can burn to the ground because neither neighbors nor the fire department can get there. The doctor cannot get out, and to reach the hospital would be out of the question. If a neighbor woman is "expecting" the whole town goes to bed saying, "I hope Mary's baby won't come tonight."

On February 22, 1945, I find the following in my diary: "16 below zero with a heavy wind, snow drifting, car would not start." Starting a car on a cold morning is an experience folks who live in Florida miss. Everyone has a strong faith in his own car and feels sure his will start even if others do not. Most cars sit outdoors all night, for it takes too much time mornings to shovel out



the garage driveway when you have to be at work at seven.

Each morning the car owner goes out with a confident air, even though the thermometer says twenty-two below. When the battery refuses to turn the starter over he says nothing, gets out, lifts the hood, looks in, and then tries the horn. Nothing happens, so he gets hot water and pours it here and there and tries the starter again. Still nothing happens, and by now the cold air is beginning to have a slight blue cast caused by the vibrations of a good old Maine vocabulary from all the car owners in town. One lucky fellow gets his car or truck started finally and all is well, for he can push all the others and get them started. They all start with difficulty regardless of make or model, and crash into second gear with a noise that can be heard half a mile.

Some put their trust in a Chevrolet, some in a Ford, some in other makes. It even comes to betting on them before they try to start them. After they have been pushed and are buzzing away, each one discovers it was really no fault with the car. Didn't Doc know his battery was down a little? Of course he

did! And Ted remembers now that he forgot to file those bad points.

Cars in winter are not the trusty steeds you drive in the summer. They have been winterized to the last degree, but you still cannot depend on them not to freeze up on the road, miles from a house or garage. Then there is nothing to do but get out and walk somewhere, anywhere; you can't sit there and freeze. Our cars are heated as warm as the living room, but that doesn't mean we can ride in them dressed in a silk dress, stockings and a jacket. We have to be prepared for an emergency—so we are uncomfortably warm if everything goes all right.

After driving a school bus for twelve years I feel I can speak as an authority on winter driving. During that time I have met with every experience from frozen radiators to flat tires, from being pulled out of the mud with horses to being hit over the head by mistake with a lunch box when an argument between the boys came to blows. To get acquainted with Maine's winter driving I recommend driving a school bus.

February is a visiting month in small



towns. After being shut in the house since November, housewives feel the need of getting the news first hand instead of over the telephone. We can "drop in" on a neighbor early in the forenoon or be more formal and go in the afternoon. Beds will be made and dishes done by eight-thirty, so it is perfectly proper to go then. When you get up at five in the morning, it is a poor housekeeper who isn't spic and span by eight-thirty. An afternoon call can be made by one-thirty, for Maine women relax from one to four o'clock. Winter afternoons are not wasted since that is the time when knitting, spring sewing, rug making, and afghans come out. Maine housekeepers are busy preparing for spring house cleaning and the annual fair exhibits.

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**The month can still be full of surprises, bad storms and sub-zero temperatures, but it is like a cold in your head—it gets better in time.**

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Articles made for the church fair are made at "sewing bees" held in different homes. Each hostess tries to outdo the other in dinner preparations, and ladies who are unable to do fancy sewing go to pull basting threads in order to be in on the dinner. A sewing bee hums like a beehive with all the small-town gossip being told in a semi-whisper, and it is a difficult task to listen to several stories at the same time and keep them straight. Everything is made at these bees from bedspreads to dishcloths, called in the privacy of Maine homes a "dishrag." These cloths are really a thing of beauty and a joy with dirty dishes, for housewives take great pride in them and you can see them arrayed on the clothesline every sunny day. Hours of spare time are spent in searching for new patterns and ways to make them. They are knitted or crocheted in bright colors and embroidered with tiny blue and pink flowers. They are boiled, rinsed, and aired until they always have the smell of the outdoors clinging to them.

Lightning once caused a mystery in town which was never explained. Gram was washing dishes when a flash struck the barn. Luckily it did no harm and the small blaze was soon extinguished by the neighbors, but when the excitement was over, Gram's dishcloth had vanished. Neighbor women joined in the hunt for it, but it was never found. The only decision we could reach was that in her fright she burned it in the kitchen stove. So there we have the mystery of the

missing dishrag—no clues, no witnesses, and no fingerprints!

Another dishcloth once missing from action was found, at great embarrassment to the owner. It was Saturday night in a Maine lumber camp. The supper, of course, consisted of beans baked in a huge bean pot. All the men ate heartily and pronounced the beans unusually good. During the meal, someone spilled his coffee. The cook looked for the dishcloth to wipe it from the oilcloth-covered table, but in vain—and he returned to his supper wondering where he had mislaid it. When it came time to wash dishes, he had to find another cloth. At last the dishes were finished—all but the bean pot. The men had eaten all the beans except a few left in the bottom of the pot, and as the cook

scraped them out he felt something. Lo and behold, there was his missing dishcloth! The unusually good beans had been baked a la dishrag. Beans are still served in lumber camps on Saturday nights, but this crew does not care for them.

Perhaps the expression "dishrag" came when great-grandmother tore the flap from great-grandpa's worn-out clean shirt and used it for dish washing. I cannot believe it too bad a thing to happen to anyone to discover in the bottom of a pot of baked beans a clean white dishcloth beautifully embroidered with blue roses or forget-me-nots. It only adds an unusual bit of Maine flavor.

Each month of the year has its favorite sports in Maine, and February is no exception. Out-of-state folks may have the idea that skiing is the only sport possible here in February, but our winter carnivals are not famous for their skiing alone. Very often an air show is the attraction at carnivals, when plane races are fast and exciting, and bombs are dropped at targets on a lake. Horse racing on the ice has become a well-liked sport and ice fishing is a regular week-end pastime. Every little lake and pond is a busy place when the season gets under way. The march of progress has made this an easy and comfortable sport compared to the way grandpa did it. Little houses are hauled by cars and set up on the ice. The fisherman sets his traps, goes inside, builds a fire in the stove, and settles down to read and toast his

feet—with all the comforts of home. All he has to do is look out the window occasionally to see if any flags are up on the traps. Outside there are no traffic regulations on the broad shining street of ice, no speed limit, but plenty of room for cars to try out their speed away from traffic cops.

Small boys build fires on the ice and roast their fish as they catch them, no doubt spoiling their appetite for supper. Fish houses are crowded as near together as tents on the midway at the county fair. Each fisherman talks back and forth to his next door neighbor, and it seems they all must have to stake out claims to their traps to tell one from the other. Each house has a car parked beside it; and as the smoke rolls out from each stove funnel, it looks as though the lake were on fire. The spirits of the red men who once paddled their canoes on Maine lakes must think the Gods are doing strange things.

February can be a month for a picnic of a different kind, especially if you have a bit of adventure hidden away in your mind. I find records in my diaries of happy picnic days in the middle of February. Usually Doc and I go alone on these picnics, not because it is not safe to take the children, but because it helps add to my hopes of danger. We select a Sunday afternoon after a big storm and pack enough food to last a week, with plenty of hot coffee. We take along several blankets and go into the mountains of New Hampshire, either Pinkham or Crawford Notch. The night before we go I lie awake and imagine our getting snow-bound. We always go through the experience with ease and comfort in my mind and I build pictures of the stories I would have to tell my friends.

We would find just as much snow in Maine, and I have to admit that New Hampshire's roads are better cared for than ours, but I have to go to another state to get the spirit of the thing. We always find the trip a pleasant one. The roads are in splendid condition and the mountains, like enormous ice cream cones, are more beautiful than in summer. Everywhere we see cars parked and open trails to the best places for skiing. There are state road camps and Red Cross emergency stations open the year round. So far, I have seen no place where my imagination will let us get snow-bound. The keen air has given us a big appetite, so we park in the most lonesome spot we can find and eat our supper, hemmed in by huge

snowbanks and the deepening twilight. This may be it! Maybe the car will not start again. There is no sound, but I was sure I heard a cat yell. My husband says only a house cat, but I know it must be a mountain lion for no house cat would be here. We finish our lunch and I find that the food that was to last a week is all gone except for one crabmeat sandwich.

The car starts at the first buzz of the starter and my hopes of being here overnight are gone unless we happen to blow two tires. Around the first turn, just out of sight of our parking place, is a house, the yard well shoveled and smoke coming from the chimney. We arrive home safely and have to shovel out the front door where the snow has drifted before we can get inside. As I wearily shovel, all I can think of is that it must have been a house cat I heard and that nothing ever happens to me.

After keeping weather reports for so many years, it seems strange that no bad days make much impression on my memory. I can find no outstanding conditions of either especially hot or cold weather that leaves any memory of the weather itself. I can remember that on the night Norman was born the temperature was forty below. Our garage had just been opened as a public one, but cars were scarce in those days and the doctor still made his rounds with his horse. At forty below a horse could not stand outdoors all night and the garage being the only outside building we had, the horse was tied up there and covered with a blanket. During the night he became cold or restless

---

## LOVE SONG FOR A MAN FROM MAINE

His belly is white as a potato slice  
and just as round.

His neck and calves are grained and hard  
as new-split wood.

Yet when his green eyes look out to sea  
He doesn't miss a thing as far away as China.  
He's got that cutting edge a woman can just  
lean into

And let slice to the quick bare marrow  
of her soul.

In the end, the best I could ask is  
to be buried beside him.

Let it be in good potato growing ground.

Susan Davis  
Kearsage, N.H.

and kicked out two windows. This is my only impression of the cold spell, but of course I was not thinking much about the weather that night. There is one other incident I remember. We were young and had very little money then and had set up house-keeping with an old stove my grandfather gave me. It had passed its days of usefulness in forty-below temperatures and I can remember Mother going downstairs, after being up all night with the new baby, to find the cat quietly eating the warmed up potatoes from the frying pan on the stove. It is the humorous things we remember about bad weather, and I believe it is because all of our lives we have been used to extremes and sudden changes. I can look back in my diary to five years ago and read "twenty below all day with heavy wind" and can remember nothing at all about it unless some event of the life of the family makes it memorable.

I may be criticized when I say that a newcomer to Maine should settle in the country in order to form the best opinion of our winters. After a heavy storm the radio gives reports of the streets that are closed in Portland for snow removal, and if you venture into the city, you will find that traffic is all tied up on the open streets. We have one road that is always open, wide and smooth. You have no orders to stay off the back roads. If you care to put on chains and try one, the privilege is yours. If you get stuck you can walk out and get a truck to pull you out, and this service is usually free-of-charge; for it is considered bad manners to charge for this when you may need the same help at any time.

February is the big month in my family for an industry which is fast disappearing from Maine—that of ice cutting. Electricity in rural places has brought in refrigerators, coolers, and deep freezers, but many people still prefer ice for many uses. Each year the market for ice drops off, but Doc still cuts thousands of cakes with his own machines and loaders made by himself.

The season is a busy one while it lasts, for every minute counts. The ponds are scraped clean of snow and the field of ice is "floated," or cut all the way around by hand. This keeps the ice up and prevents water coming onto it from warm days or a heavy snowstorm. Long strips of ice are then cut by the machine which has a marker to keep the line straight. The machine cuts within a few inches of the bottom and the rest is sawed with a hand ice

saw, broken off, and floated down a channel to the loader where an endless chain carries it to the waiting trucks. The loader has an instrument that counts each cake as it is loaded. The years in this business have brought many things to keep it from being all profit or a pleasant job. A foot of snow means more expense in cleaning, a warm day can keep the trucks from getting through water on the shores, and unusually cold winters can freeze the ice so deep that it is a problem to cut through it. Doc now has saws for thin ice and thick, one being capable of cutting through eighteen inches of ice. He has had all kinds of experiences, from losing ice chisels or falling in himself, to having his truck with all the machinery on it sink in thirty feet of water. The chisels stayed at the bottom, Doc came home and changed all his frozen clothes, but the truck came near to putting him out of business. Not only the truck, but the owner has a "sinking" feeling to watch hundreds of dollars worth of equipment disappear at the bottom of the lake. Without the kind of help that Maine people give to anyone in trouble, Doc's truck never would have been removed. A heavy truck with a winch and strong cables were attached to the body of Doc's truck, which luckily had the front end out of water. But at the first pull, the ice truck went down! Again luck was there and the cables held, but darkness and a blinding snowstorm forced them to leave. The truck rested calmly but coldly at the bottom of Harrison's Long Lake for two days and a night, with only a hole in the ice to mark the spot. When the storm cleared, helping hands sawed a channel to shore and the truck was dragged in. It was hauled home to a warm garage looking like a huge snowball. The ice machinery, which was chained on, stood the ride well and only a belt and an ice saw were lost. In three days the truck was back on the job, the event recorded in my diary, and the experience forgotten except as being a part of cutting ice.

This is not a story of the hardships of life in Maine by someone snow-bound in a camp miles from other people, nor is it a tale by someone who came here for a winter so she could write a book about it. It is a story of life as it is lived by the majority of Maine people—who ask no pity and who never feel sorry for themselves. We know no need or want, but each day the struggle goes on to keep from knowing them. Living in Maine,

like any job that you work hard at, pays off in big dividends and we feel the price is worth it. We are glad to share our state with anyone, for we have plenty of everything to spare—lakes, mountains, silent pools, rivers, hills, work, play, and above all a certain peace and holiness. It is not alone the "land of remembered vacations." It can prove to be a refuge and sanctuary to all those whose hearts are troubled and who need rest and a new courage. We offer all these things freely and gladly, but we cannot give the power to find them. That must come from Maine and from God.

There is a calmness and security in the little things of winter that we learn to appreciate: the beauty of a winter sunset that our summer guests never see, the display of northern lights, the early morning rising when you look out the window the first thing to see if there are lights in your neighbor's kitchen and smoke coming from the chimney. All is well with your friends and the home town. There is security in the well-filled cellar, the barn full of wood, and the warm fire-lit living room in the evenings when the shades are pulled to shut out the weather.

Candlemas Day is over, flocks of chickadees come to the feeding station for their food, and the snow begins to melt some on a warm day. We begin to think of spring and all it will mean to us, but just as we get up our courage, winter returns with renewed force. Now is the time to get out your snowshoes and discover the true beauty of the Maine woods. Stories and movies have described them, but each one sees them differently. I see them mostly as a difficult place to get to, but if one has courage to put on skis or snowshoes and get away from the sounds of traffic and snowplows, it can prove a great adventure. A growth of firs is truly an enchanted forest. Is that the trail of a fairy's wing showing faintly in the snow, or could it be a tiny elf who walked around that stump so many times? That path could be where a tiny woods mouse hurried back and forth between storms for food for its babies, or it could be the path to the castle of the King of the Fairies. Over here under this pine are a few dry Mayflower leaves with no signs of life, yet you know the promise of spring is sleeping there. In the distance you hear the sad voice of a phoebe. The trees rustle in a faint breeze as if they were trying to tell you things you never can understand.



*The view from Mt. Tir'em in Waterford many years ago*

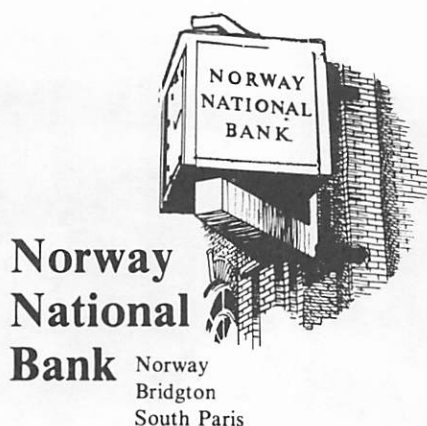
## **All is well with your friends and the home town...**

You go home to a hot supper in a warm kitchen with a new hope and a strange peace in your heart.

February draws to an end with each day busy and full of content and you wonder where the time goes. The days are much longer, with no more turning on the lights at four o'clock. The month can still be full of surprises, bad storms and sub-zero temperatures, but it is like a cold in your head—it gets better in time.



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## PEDDLER PAGE



FOR SALE: 1910 Calendar Plate, cupids striking New Years bell, "Greetings from the E.N. Swett Shoe Co., Norway. Purple splash luster plate, picture of O. O. Beach, Maine (horse & buggy days), made in Thuringia, Ger. Leaf shaped pink luster dish, picture of Deering Memorial Church, South Paris, made in Ger. for N. Dayton Bolster Co., South Paris. Tiny pictorial dish of Norway Shoe Co. made in Ger. for G. W. Hobbs, Norway (has chip). If interested, write Mr. or Mrs. Leland Witham, Rt. 1, Box 136B, Teague, TX 75860.

FOR SALE: Hart Javelin XXL skis, 200 cm. G.S. with Look Nevada bindings, excellent condition. Price: \$35. Ski boots, Nordica, size 8½, excellent condition. Price: \$40. Ski Poles, Kerma-World Champ.: \$10. Tel. 743-6485, Greg Harthorne, Norway.

## BRAINTEASER ANSWER

Winner of Brainteaser X was Darrell Korhonen of Norway, who will receive a free magazine subscription for figuring out that Mr. A. played right wing on the hockey team. Mr. B. played left wing, Mr. C. played right defense, Mrs. D. played center, Miss E. was the goalie. And Miss F. played left defense.

Other correct answers received (in order of postmark) were from Don Carrier, Poland; P. Ledlie, Buckfield; Arnold Twitchell, South Paris; Steve and Sandra Roderick, Mechanic Falls; Ken Morse, Waterford; Sheryl Barr, Kriston Briggs, Oxford; Bill McCoy, Casco; Thomas Hammond, East Hiram; Dan Grover, Bethel;

Jack Parquette, Mt. Vernon; Shirley Washburn, Kittery Point; Tom Wells, Portland; Judy Allen, Wallingford, Ct.; Laura Trundy, Hebron; Ruth and Steve Higgins, Oakland; and James A. Myles, Norway. Shirley Hodson, Fryeburg, had the correct answer, but the envelope showed no postmark. If we hear that it was mailed on or before Jan. 5, then a free subscription will also go to Hodson.

## BRAINTEASER XI

Imagine you have two cups identical in size and shape, one filled halfway with coffee, the other filled halfway with tea. Suppose you take a teaspoonful of coffee from the coffee cup and pour it in the tea cup. Stir the mixture in the tea cup. Now take a teaspoonful of the mixture and pour it into the coffee cup. Will there be more tea in the coffee cup than coffee in the tea cup, or less?

## YOU DON'T SAY

"When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable and, to the citizen, most dismal swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place. There is the strength, the marrow of Nature. The wild-wood covers the virgin-mold, and the same soil is good for man and trees. A township where one primitive forest waves above while another primitive forest rots below—such a town is fitted not only to raise corn and potatoes, but poets and philosophers for the coming ages."

Thoreau

## ROSE HIPS

Solid flesh swollen with summer's hot force  
Past the tenuous sweet of spring  
Give me the strength to treasure  
The durable fruit of our love  
Though I miss the perfume of the roses

Susan Davis  
Kearsage, N.H.



DEEDORSEIAN  
17-22 mpg



DE WAGON  
16-20 mpg



DE COUPE  
17-22 mpg



WHEEL DRIVE WAGON  
16-20 mpg

WE  
BURN  
Regular  
GAS

## OXFORD SUBARU

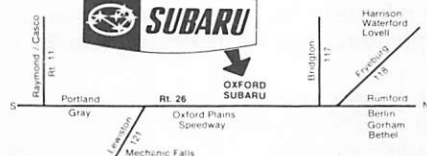
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There was a time when the dark, sweet liquid was more popular than it is today; it was once a staple sweetener in every pantry. Each general store had a barrel of molasses, from which people would fill their own earthen-ware crocks. Sugar and molasses had been items for use and trade ever since Marco Polo brought it to Europe from India in the 13th century. Another tourist, Columbus, brought it to the new world, looking for a suitable place to produce it. The climate and the soon-burgeoning slave trade made the West Indies a perfect place for sugar plantations to flourish.

The first American refinery was built in 1689, and the trade between the colonists and the West Indies brought the companion products of sugar, molasses and rum into prospering New England. Molasses is a by-product of sugar refining. Raw sugar and water are combined to make a syrup, which is boiled in steam evaporators to crystallize the sugar. The liquid which is left after crystallization contains about 70% sucrose and is light molasses (the most delicate and most chosen for table and cooking use). A centrifuge can then spin more crystals out of the molasses, leaving the dark "blackstrap" form (35% sucrose) which is best for cooking. Molasses contains iron and calcium, which refined sugar does not, and so is an excellent substitute for all or part of the sugar in some recipes. In 1700, individual consumption of sugar was about 5 pounds per year. Today, the average American consumes over 100 pounds of empty, refined calories.

*A little molasses goes a long way.*

# Homemade

WITH MOLASSES

The following recipes are all over a century old:

## MOLASSES DROP COOKIES

1 egg	2 tsp. baking soda
½ c. brown sugar	1 tsp. ginger
1 c. molasses	1 tsp. cinnamon
1 c. hot water	1 tsp. salt
1 c. soft butter & lard (½ c. ea.) or shortening	
enough flour to make thick batter (abt. 2 c.)	

Beat egg well, mix with sugar and butter. Mix together molasses and water, add soda to this. Combine with sugar & egg mixture. Stir in spices, salt and sifted flour. Drop by spoonful onto a greased cookie pan, place a raisin in the middle and bake at 400° for 10 minutes. Children used to eat these for breakfast and carry some to school in their lunch pails.

## INDIAN PUDDING

1 qt. milk, scalded	1 tsp. cinnamon
5 T. cornmeal	½ tsp. ginger
½ c. molasses	1 c. cold milk
1 tsp. salt	

Scald milk in the top of a double boiler, mix together all other ingredients except 1 c. cold milk. Add slowly to scalded milk, stir until thickened. Cook for 15 minutes, but do not boil. Turn into a well-greased deep dish, pour 1 c. cold milk over the top of the pudding, but do not stir. Bake in a slow oven (300°) for 90 minutes. (The slow baking makes this pudding smooth. Colonists used to eat their Indian pudding with plain cream, but nowadays, we're apt to put ice cream on top.)

207 / 743-8225

# BitterSweet

The Magazine of Maine's Hills & Lakes Region

It will be a great help in planning editorial and advertising content to see your response to all the questions below. However, should you find any of the questions objectionable, please skip them.

## READER SURVEY

*Please take time to read through this survey and answer the questions you feel are appropriate to your household. The results will be published in the May issue.*

*We appreciate the time, effort & expense involved in your participation in what we hope will be the first of many readers' polls. Believe us, your response will make a difference.*

- How many adult (over 18) members of your household looked at this issue of **BitterSweet**? Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_  
How many adults outside your household? Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
- After you finish reading this issue of **BitterSweet**, what will you do with it?  
☐ Keep it      ☐ Discard it      ☐ Use it to start the fire  
☐ Give it to a friend or relative      ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- How many of the last four issues have you:  
 Looked at:      ☐ One      ☐ Two      ☐ Three      ☐ Four  
 Read Thoroughly:      ☐ One      ☐ Two      ☐ Three      ☐ Four
- How many pages of an average issue do you read?  
☐ less than 14 pages      ☐ 29 - 44 pages  
☐ 15 - 28 pages      ☐ more than 45 pages
- What was your favorite recent article? \_\_\_\_\_
- What recent article did you like least? \_\_\_\_\_
- What do you like *most* about the magazine? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- What do you like *least* about the magazine? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- How do you obtain your copies of **BitterSweet**?  
☐ Paid subscription      ☐ Buy at newsstand      ☐ Borrow from friend



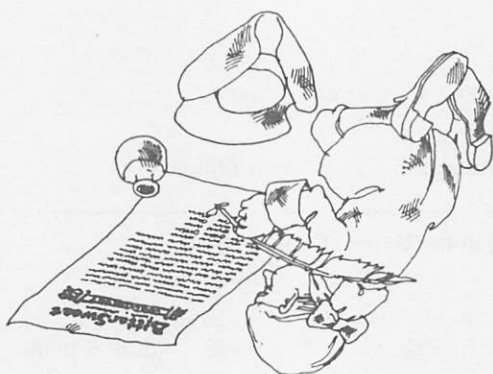
10. What type of material would you like more of in the magazine? (i.e. local history, photography, interviews with local residents, games & puzzles, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 
11. Are you: ☐ Male ☐ Female
12. What is your age? ☐ Under 30 ☐ 31-45 ☐ 45-59 ☐ Over 60
13. Please indicate the highest level of schooling you have reached thus far:  
☐ Grade School ☐ High School ☐ College  
☐ Graduate School ☐ Beyond graduate school
14. What type of work do you do in general?  
☐ woods work ☐ farm work ☐ professional work  
☐ factory work ☐ sales work ☐ homemaking  
☐ other \_\_\_\_\_
15. What is your approximate yearly household income?  
☐ Under \$10,000 ☐ 10,000-15,000 ☐ 15,000-25,000  
☐ Over \$25,000
16. Do you own more than one motor vehicle? ☐ yes ☐ no how many? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Do you: ☐ rent ☐ own a trailer ☐ own a house
18. Do you have a second home in Maine? ☐ yes ☐ no  
in New Hampshire? ☐ yes ☐ no
19. Are you a down-hill skier? ☐ yes ☐ no  
If yes, during the last year, have you skied in:  
☐ Maine ☐ Vt. ☐ N.H. ☐ other area \_\_\_\_\_
20. Are you a cross-country skier? ☐ yes ☐ no
21. Do you own: *how many?*  
a garden ☐ yes ☐ no \_\_\_\_\_  
a chain saw ☐ ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
power tools ☐ ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
snowmobile ☐ ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
power boat ☐ ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
non-powered boat ☐ ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
farm equipment ☐ ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
roto-tiller ☐ ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
22. Do you raise a lot of your own vegetables? ☐ yes ☐ no
23. Do you raise all or some of your own meat? ☐ yes ☐ no
24. How is your home heated? ☐ oil ☐ wood ☐ solar ☐ wind power  
☐ some combination of above \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_
25. What bank services have you utilized in the last three years?  
☐ Personal loan ☐ Mortgage ☐ Auto loan ☐ Savings Acct. ☐ Checking
26. In the next three years, do you expect to buy or build a  
☐ year-round home ☐ second or vacation home

27. Are you a summer resident of Maine only? ☐ yes ☐ no
28. When you vacation in Maine, do you stay at:  
☐ Rented cottage ☐ your own cottage ☐ Inn/Hotel/Motel  
☐ Campground ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
29. Do you do a majority of your shopping in the Oxford County area?  
☐ yes ☐ no
30. In the last six months, how often have you shopped for:  
*1 - 3 times* *4 - 6 times* *Over 6 times*
- |                                  |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Clothing                         | _____ |
| Sporting Goods                   | _____ |
| Drugs                            | _____ |
| Gifts                            | _____ |
| Hardware/Household Items         | _____ |
| Antiques                         | _____ |
| Furniture                        | _____ |
| Carpeting or Interior Decorating | _____ |
| Building Supplies                | _____ |
| Flowers & Plants                 | _____ |
31. Do you and/or your family eat out at a restaurant  
☐ about once a week ☐ about once a month ☐ more often ☐ less often
32. Given the choice, would you rather see the magazine stay the same size and price, or expand, even if expansion should mean an increase in price?  
☐ stay the same ☐ expand
33. Would you like to see coverage expanded beyond Oxford County?  
☐ yes ☐ no Comments \_\_\_\_\_
- 
34. Would you consider submitting material for publication? ☐ yes ☐ no  
 If so, what type of material? (i.e., fiction, poetry, interview, history, artwork, etc.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
35. What do you think of this survey? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
36. Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_
- 

*Thank you for filling in this form.*

Please pull this section out of the magazine; fold it; seal it; add a stamp and send it to us before March 31st. We'll be ready for it.

OR: Instead of mailing this survey, you may choose to leave it at BOOKS-N-THINGS in the Oxford Plaza, Oxford, Maine.



*Please fold along this line*

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## MOLASSES BRAN MUFFINS

2 T. shortening	1 c. flour
¼ c. granul. sugar	1 tsp. baking powder
1 egg, well-beaten	½ tsp. salt
1 c. sour milk	½ tsp. soda
2 c. bran	3 T. molasses

Cream shortening until creamy and fluffy, stir in sugar and beat until light. In another bowl, mix together egg, milk, and molasses; add to sugar mixture and beat well. Add 2 c. bran, allowing it to stand for 20 minutes, until all liquid is absorbed. Sift together dry ingredients and add to bran mixture. Fill well-greased muffin pans 2/3 full, bake at 400° for 30 minutes. Makes 14-16 2½" muffins. (If you don't have sour milk on hand, simply add 1 T. cider vinegar to 1 c. sweet milk.)

## CLASSIC GINGERBREAD

½c. shortening	½ c. sugar
1 egg, well-beaten	1½ tsp. baking soda
1 c. molasses	½ tsp. cloves
2½ c. flour	1 tsp. ginger
½ tsp. salt	1 tsp. cinnamon
1 c. hot water	

Work the shortening until it is light and fluffy. Add sugar gradually, beating until light. Add beaten egg and molasses. Sift dry ingredients together and add to sugar mixture alternately with water, one-third at a time. Beat well after each addition. Bake in a greased and floured 9x9x2" cake pan at 350° for 50 minutes. This is best served with whipped cream, to which has been added a little vanilla extract.

## GLAZE FOR HAM

With Easter coming up, you may be baking a ham soon; molasses makes a delicious glaze. Here's how to do it: Bake the ham for the recommended time; when it has 30 minutes left to cook, remove the ham from the oven, score the fat layer on the outside of the ham with a sharp knife (cutting it in a pattern would be nice) to make it crispy, and pour a little molasses over the scored surface. Replace in the oven and bake at 375° for 30 minutes. Be careful not to over-bake the ham, as glazes will burn easily.

## MOLASSES BREAD CUSTARD

6 slices whole wheat bread	¼ tsp. salt
3 c. whole milk	½ tsp. nutmeg
3 eggs	1 tsp. cinnamon
½ c. molasses	¼ c. chopped walnuts
	½ c. raisins

Cube bread. In a bowl, beat eggs with a beater 'til frothy. Add molasses, milk, salt & spices; beat until thoroughly mixed. Arrange bread and raisins in alternate layers in a greased baking dish. Pour the egg-milk mixture over it. Let it stand a few minutes, until bread absorbs liquid, then sprinkle top with chopped nuts. Bake in a slow oven (325°) until firm—1 hour. This recipe is a winner because it has no added sugar.



The following recipe is grandmother's. Grandfather was a farmer who usually had steak and eggs for breakfast, and a big, meat-and-potatoes meal for dinner. Supper, after the cows were milked, was always shredded wheat—his favorite food. Grandmother was well-acquainted with shredded wheat!

## CARRIE'S SHREDDED WHEAT PUDDING

1 qt. milk, scalded	2 c. shredded wheat
½ c. molasses	biscuits
2 eggs, beaten	pinch of salt
1 tsp. vanilla	raisins
a little butter (about ¼ c.)	

Beat all ingredients together and bake slowly for 1½ hours. Serve with whipped cream. That is the whole recipe!

## BREAD & MOLASSES

When we were children, we had no use for fancy recipes. The best of all possible uses for molasses was straight from the jug—poured over a nice, thick slice of homemade bread and golden butter. Ambrosia!



# Ayah

We consider your comments and suggestions an important means of discovering our readers' interests. Representative and appropriate letters will be published as space allows. Most likely answers won't be necessary, and probably the only response you'll receive will be a most appropriate "Ayah!"

## BETTER THAN GOSSIP

This is really a fine magazine. I have lived in Otisfield all my life and have learned more from your local tales on people and town happenings than I ever heard in all of the local gossip sessions around town.

Keep up the good work.

Howard Shackley  
Harrison

## BRAINTEASER RESUSCITATION

I enjoyed this month's *Brainteaser* very much. I labored over its solution for seven minutes, during which time I let go with two primal screams. A concerned neighbor called me in order to determine whether I would need the emergency services of the local rescue unit. No need, however, because I have my own oxygen mask available.

Mark Schussler  
South Paris

## TEXAS PEDDLERS

We receive *BitterSweet* magazine as a gift subscription and really enjoy it. We are N.H.S. graduates of '32 and '33 and lived in Norway until 1967.

In this latest issue you are asking for more items for the Peddler Page and if you will accept an ad from out of state, these articles I am listing are of interest only to Maine People.

Leland & Margaret Witham  
Teague, Texas

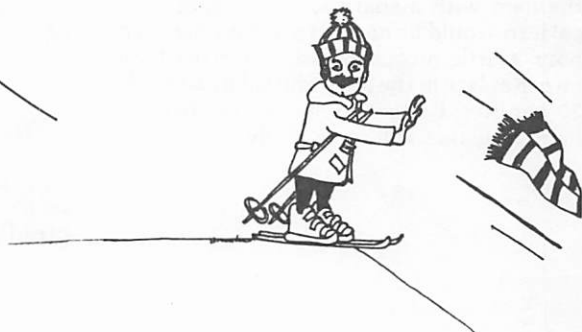
**Ayah:** We thank you for the listing of articles; you will find them on the Peddler Page (22).

Ed.

## AND ONE FROM NORWAY NATIONAL BANK

If no one has yet written in to identify the *Can You Place It?* in the November *BitterSweet*, wait no longer. The truck was owned by my two uncles, Hobart and Clifford Denison of Harrison, who operated a hatching egg and hatchery business at the family farm. I am sure that the picture displays their entry in a Harrison Old Home Days parade in the early 30's. I think that two of the ladies in the truck are my aunts,

Page 31...



*"Go With Gerry"*

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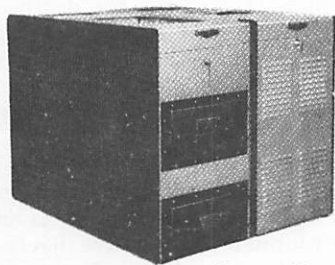


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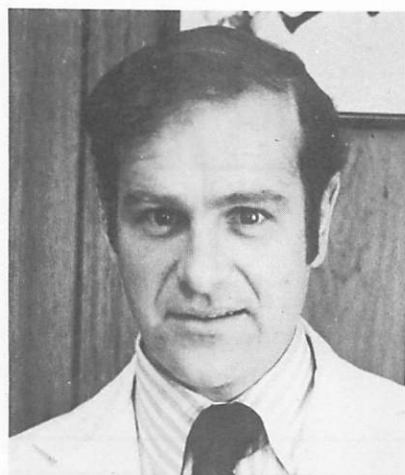
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**CHARLES STREET, SOUTH PARIS, ME.**

# Medicine For The Hills



by Michael A. Lacombe, M.D.



## SYMPHONY

Nowhere more than in music do we see the magic of group participation. Whether in rock group, dance band, barbershop quartet, or symphony orchestra, there exists a harmony of parts which is greater than its sum. Performer and audience alike are uplifted. The music fulfills a basic need and, for a time, allows escape.

Needs fulfilled; an escape from life's burdens—we all could use a little more of both. An art form, music, both fulfills and unburdens. Somewhere in this lies the key to some very palpable problems of our own.

Certainly loving is an art form all its own. To love well is no easy task. We all know that to love and be loved can be fulfilling and unburdening, at least in the abstract. We have the platitudes down: we know what we *should* do. And most of us have tasted that fulfillment, that richness of life for a time. But then we have let it slip away, turning back toward business, the social graces, or whatever it is that consumes us at the moment. We're caught up, understandably, in the mere fact of existing, in coping, in

trying to keep our heads above water. We often forget why we are here.

Often fear of rejection also gets in the way of loving. We isolate and insulate ourselves from hurt. In failing to give, to love, we lose love's fulfillment and only add to life's heaviness.

*What does all this high-minded talk have to do with our area's health problems?* Let's digress for a moment.

Every day people with fatigue, headaches, and a feeling of tiredness all the time seek the advice of their doctors. They believe themselves to be physically ill. The signs are there: the drinking problem, the obesity, the absence of feeling. The sadness is palpable. These are depressed people. They are affronted at the mere suggestion that their problem might be psychological.

Depression knows no particular class. No one is immune to it. But it seems that there are two groups of people most commonly depressed. These two groups, as we shall see, in some ways complement each other.

In the first group are those advancing in years, for whom life seems to have lost its purpose. Children grown, spouse deceased, retirement forced upon them, they feel like a shadow of their former selves. Feeling unwanted, they are not ready to die, yet they find themselves wishing for death. Soap operas provide a poor means of escape. A visit to the doctor becomes a major social event. They want to give but have no one who needs them. So they mark time and wait.

Added to this group are those of any age who are alone and are contending poorly with the loneliness. For them life is empty. They are routinely disappointed that there is no easy explanation for their complaints, disappointed when a doctor tells them "nothing is wrong" when they know otherwise. They are often unwilling to accept depression as the cause of their problems. They may be temporarily appeased with a nondescript "It's your nerves." They nod and turn away.

For the second group, life is all too full. In this group are the single parents and those living in real poverty. A life on welfare, four kids in a trailer, or a full-time job on top of mothering, meals, and housekeeping. These people barely cope if they cope at all. They scream at the kids and suffer guilt long after. They cry uncontrollably. They sleep poorly. Seeing their children suffer with this life,

they wish for more for them, but see no escape. They, as patients, are much more willing to accept a psychological basis for their feelings. Life is oppressive for them—that's obvious. That there are no easy answers simply adds to their depression. Their doctor says to them, "You need time to yourself. You need to get out more." "Sure," they respond, and walk away.

As we address these problems as our own, consider again the idea of loving, as an art form like music, as a means of fulfillment and peace. If we can turn from the paralyzing problems of Appalachia and Biafra and attempt to solve some of the problems closer to home, maybe we can come up with more than just noise. Maybe we can make our own music.

An audience has already been suggested. During this, *the International Year of the Child*, Kiwanis will soon "Light Up A Life" with its focus on children. Children, forgiving, ever-tolerant, unrejecting, can serve as the audience for our concert. If well-orchestrated, a program of playing to the children of this area would have immense possibilities.

Kiwanis, and possibly the other service clubs, could serve as stage managers, setting up the season's schedule. Information about children's athletics, youth concerts, children's theater, nature hikes, films, and the like would be within their province.

A good orchestra requires financial backing—the managers could find money for lift tickets, baseball gloves, and decent sneakers.

Now let's construct an orchestra—one that is not too brass-heavy. Granted, we will want much horn-blowing for this venture, but we must be careful not to drown out the strings, who are naturally shy. For the strings and woodwinds, I would suggest the two groups of people already mentioned. The strings, those single people with seemingly empty lives, will gladly play to the children, if coaxed. There are many of them, and we will need them all. The woodwinds, the single parents whose lives are all too full, will be called upon to state the problem, much as the oboe does at the beginning of a symphony. And they, too, will need some coaxing, for although they are in need of help, they are not in the habit of asking for it.

We have the orchestra, the audience, and the stage managers. And we've decided on a place to perform—our own backyard. But we



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still need a conductor, or a small group of conductors—the key to the entire operation. The type of conductor I'd suggest would be a long-time resident of the community, who is at home most of the time, and not mindful of the phone ringing constantly, someone who is on several grapevines, and someone quite adept at coaxing. As with any orchestra, the conductor could make or break us.

A concert might go like this: Fanfare from the *brass*...Conductor, hearing of a divorce, makes a phone call. Children need driving to Little League. Conductor calls on his *strings*; someone will drive twice a week all summer. Perfect.

Gradeschool teacher calls. She has a little girl with musical talent. *Brass* called; tickets to children's concert acquired. *Strings* called; someone will take her.

Little boy with no equipment wants to learn skating; *brass* gets skates; rides arranged to rink.

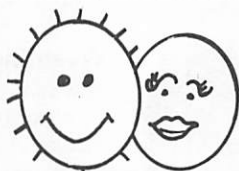
Single parent mother working full-time has sick child at home from school. Calls conductor. Conductor calls on the *strings*. Someone calls mother: "Let me take

her...and listen, anytime this happens, you call me, hear? And by the way...I've got an extra casserole here for tonight..."

Conductor calls: "John, you've been drinking again...never mind who told me...listen, they need another Little League coach...don't give me that, I remember you playing for Buckfield...Yes, next Thursday..."

This area is unusual in many respects. It built its own hospital without tax money. It has a disproportionate number of civic-minded people. And despite any Yankee coolness, it cares about its people. Those who have already reached out to help neighbors in need would surprise you. We have the makings of an orchestra. Let's begin to make the music.

Dr. Lacombe, a member of the Oxford Hills Internal Medicine Group, serves on the Stephens Memorial Hospital Health Education Project Advisory Board.



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Margaret and Alice Denison of Harrison and the two kids Carol Denison Libby, now of Buxton, and Jack Denison, now of Amherst, Massachusetts. I think, but I am not certain, that the driver of the truck was Stan Whitney. The truck was made from a 1918 Dodge Touring Car and served the family many years. I learned to drive in that truck. The picture was taken at the end of the Harrison block and shows the door of the old Harrison Fire Station.


If the person who took the November picture had turned around 180 degrees and waited until winter, he could have taken the picture in your December issue. That is also taken on Harrison's Main Street and shows two houses across from the Block and the Harrison Grange Hall in the background. I don't know who is driving the ox team with the logs. Perhaps someone has told you by now.

*Dick Denison  
Senior Vice President & Cashier  
Norway National Bank*

## CATBIRD

It is bright out here  
under the sun  
I cannot see clearly who calls  
from the viburnum  
dark over the brook  
dark wooded brook  
The outline is bird  
a single bird  
The sound is old hen  
thrush wren robin  
frog and song sparrow  
a frightened lost chick a child  
the mewing of a cat  
ah the bird is catbird  
catbird  
calling from shadows  
that is the creature's name  
now  
neither seen nor heard  
clearly  
but the best I can do  
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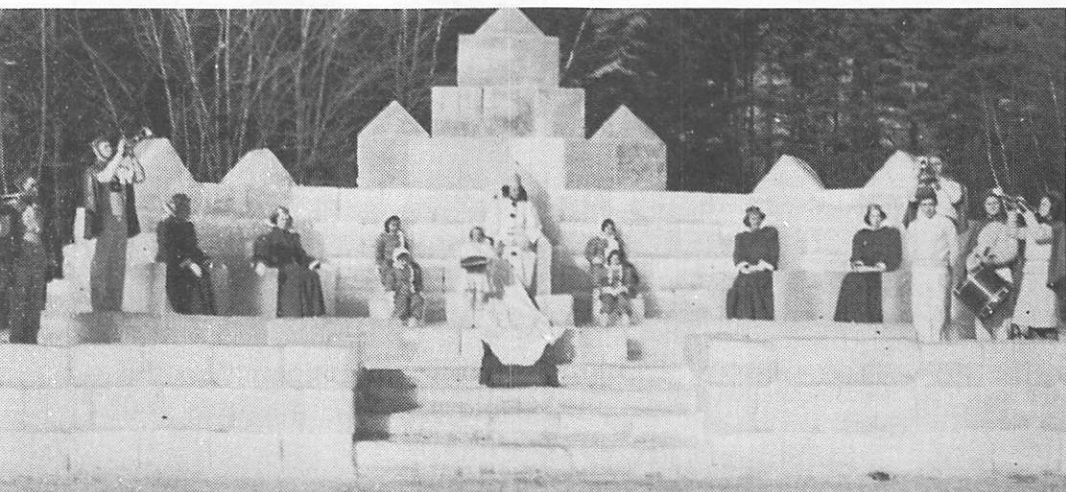
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## Goings On

"February...the month when a snow queen reigns for a day and sometimes a weekend in every town that has a high school..." writes Inez Farrington, reminiscing about rural life of the 1940's in her book, **Maine Is Forever.**

Little more than a quarter of a century later, the winter spectacles have become

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

#### Friday

- 7:30 Community Theatre Variety Show with the Queen's Coronation
- 9:30 After the Variety show—a skating party at the indoor rink

#### Saturday

- 11:00 Cross Country Ski Race
- Hockey elimination round 1 for Men's, Women's (broom), and Kids' hockey
- Medicine Ball Mangle round 1
- 11:30 Tugs of War
- 12:00 Chili & Chowder Chow Down
- 1:00 Hockey Eliminations round 2
- Kids' Hockey Championship
- Medicine Ball Mangle round 2
- 1:30 Canoe Racing
- Snowmobile Rodeo

- 2:00 Sled & toboggan races
- 3:00 Snow Dash Olympics round 1
- Medicine Ball Mangle round 3
- 5:00 Church Supper at the Methodist Church
- 8:00 Klondike Night

#### Sunday

- 10:00 Sports Area opens
- 12:00 Chili & Chowder Chow Down
- Snowmobile Race
- 12:30 Medicine Ball Mangle round 4
- 1:00 Snow Dash Olympics round 2
- 2:00 Men's & Women's Hockey Championships
- 3:00 The Great Race
- 5:00 Church Supper at the Congregational Church

more the exception than the rule, victims, it seems, of a faster-paced, more diversified way of life where family outings have been replaced by more solitary, independent pursuits.

But in Bridgton, a winter carnival revival is underway thanks chiefly to the efforts of a young law enforcement officer and shop keeper. Six years ago, Ricky Marston and Peter Lowell decided to try bringing back the event, which had been discontinued about 25 years before. The two Bridgton natives were spurred on by what Lowell terms "the boredom factor" in a town whose summer population of 20,000 drops to less than 3,500 in the winter, as well as enthusiastic reports of carnivals of old from Ricky's mother, a member of the carnival's queen court in the 1940's.

In those days, the Bridgton carnival was front page news in the Portland papers and drew headlines from as far away as Boston. The skiing, tobogganing, snowshoeing, skating, dog sled and sliding events, ice sculpture competition, parade and coronation ball were filmed by national news services and featured in movie theatre newsreels across the country. A forty-foot bobsled, the world's largest, launched the 1949 carnival and was later written up in *Life Magazine*.

"It was really fantastic," recalls Beverly Marston, who was part of the entourage of the 1941 carnival, which she describes as "the biggest and the best."

"It's something I'll never forget."

Mrs. Marston remembers being squirreled around during the three-day event in a special automobile reserved for the queen and her court, being treated to meals at many of the town's fanciest places, and being showered with gifts.

The coronation itself was a spectacular staged on Highland Lake against an impressive backdrop, a mammoth ice throne constructed by local residents. Trumpeters and young ladies in waiting flanked the queen, who wore white velvet, and members of the court, dressed in contrasting rich, red tones.

Marty Sanborn, whose husband Gordon was pilot of the famous *Miss Maine*, rented out costumes for folks to wear to the popular Klondike Night, where people danced, drank

and wagered, reliving the raucous days of the gold rush.

Recent winter carnival renditions have been scaled down a bit to suit the times. After a fairly grand comeback in 1973, complete with ice throne and parade, the weekend, which is traditionally held on Washington's Birthday, has stressed less pomp and more athletics. Snowmobile rodeos have been added, along with a variety of off-beat competitions such as ice block pushing, a medicine ball mangle (in which two teams attempt to maneuver a giant ball or air mattress across the ice and through the goal posts) and gallactic golf (a golf-like game played on ice with a tennis ball). The more traditional hockey and speed skating events continue to be popular.

Another old favorite, Klondike Night, remains one of the most frequented non-athletic activities, sharing the bill with a polished variety show staged by the community theatre group.

Although Marston and Lowell concede that without their enthusiasm and organizational skills the event might not come off each year, they're convinced that even if participation doesn't approach that of carnivals-of-old, the time and effort they put in is worth it.

"The carnival makes February bearable," says Lowell, who runs a leather and crafts shop in downtown Bridgton. "It gets some people moving around and helps combat both the boredom and bad weather."

A lot of the evening activities, such as a string of church-sponsored suppers, have become enough of an institution that they happen almost automatically now, he says. And the crowning of the carnival queen continues to be a serious, coveted honor with several candidates vying each year for the honor.

"Like everything else, you wind up getting out of it what you put into it," says Lowell, an easy-going, congenial outdoors enthusiast. "And, in these days of diminishing family-centered events, it can be a good gathering point for all family members," he says.

"I feel if one person turns up and has a good time, then the weekend has been a success," drawls Lowell. "And, I know for sure that I'll always be there, having a good time."





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## MUSIC

**THIRD ANNUAL PRESENTATION OF DOWN-HOME HARMONY:** by the Norway-Paris Chapter of the Society for Preservation & Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America; Feb. 3, 8 p.m., Oxford Hills High School Auditorium; featuring Hillsmen Chorus & Visiting Quartets.

**CONTRA & FOLK DANCING:** South Paris Legion Hall, Feb. 23, 8 p.m. Informal music, everyone welcome.

**BATES COLLEGE COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA CONCERT:** Feb. 8, 8 p.m., Bates College Chapel, Lewiston. Free admission.

**PORTLAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT/LECTURE:** Competition winner, Bates College Chase Hall Lounge, Lewiston, Feb. 14, 8 p.m.

## ART

**PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS & ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALAN MAGEE:** Hebron Academy's Hupper Gallery through Feb. 3. Gallery hours: 9-3 weekdays, 2-5 Sundays.

**WATERCOLORS BY DON LENT:** Bates College Treat Gallery, Feb. 2-Mar. 4.

## DRAMA

**A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM:** presented by Gould Academy Drama Group Feb. 16, 17, 18, at 8 p.m., Bingham Hall Auditorium.

**BUCKFIELD LEATHER & LATHER TRAVELING SHOW:** Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m., Gould Academy Bingham Hall Auditorium.

## LECTURES

**THE LIFE OF THE OCEANOGRAPHER:** by Rick Chandler, Feb. 7. **THE BARREN GROUND CARIBOU:** by Ned Therrien, Feb. 14. Sponsored by Gould Academy Outing Club, 7:30 p.m., Bingham Hall Auditorium; free admission.

**BEETHOVEN'S SONATAS:** a series of lecture/concerts by Frank Glazer; Feb. 4 in the Chapel; Feb. 5 & 6 in the Chase Hall Lounge, Bates College, all at 8 p.m. Free admission.

## SPORTS

**OXFORD HILLS HIGH SCHOOL:** Boys Varsity & JV basketball home games; Feb. 6 vs. Brunswick, 6:15 p.m.; Feb. 14 vs. Hebron, 6:15 p.m.; Feb. 16 vs. Skowhegan, 5:00 p.m.; Feb. 17 vs. Presque Isle, 7:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball home games; Feb. 7 vs. Brunswick, 5:30 p.m.; Feb. 13, vs. Waterville, 6:00 p.m.; Feb. 20 vs. Lawrence, 5:30 p.m.; Feb. 23 vs. Winslow, 5:30 p.m.

Boys Gymnastics; Mar. 3 State Meet at Brewer, 10:00 a.m.

Girls Gymnastics; Feb. 3, Gardiner/Biddeford, 10:00 a.m.; Mar. 3 Regionals, 10:00 a.m.; Mar. 10 State Meet.

Boys & Girls Ski Meets; Feb. 10, Lake Region, alpine; Feb. 13 at Gould, x-c, 3:00 p.m.; Feb. 5 at Kents Hill, x-c, 3:30 p.m.; Feb. 7 at Gould, alpine, 3:00; Feb. 16-17 Girls State Champ., Fryeburg; 19-20, Boys State Champ., Madawaska.

**FRYEBURG ACADEMY:** Boys Varsity & JV Basketball home games; Feb. 6, Sacopee Valley, 6 p.m.; Feb. 10, Buckfield, 6 p.m.; Feb. 12, North Yarmouth Academy, 3 p.m.

Girls Varsity & JV Basketball; Feb. 2, Noble, 4:30 p.m.; Feb. 8, Buckfield, 4 p.m.; Feb. 9, Massabesic, 6 p.m.

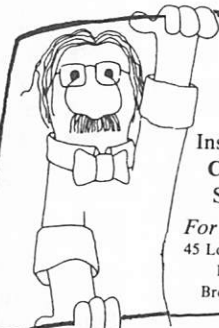
Boys & Girls Skiing; Feb. 7, Lake Region, alpine, 12:30; Feb. 8, Lake Region, x-c, 3:00.

**YMCA BASKETBALL:** through Mar. 10; Saturday mornings; Boys grades 4 & 5, OHHS gym, 9-10:30; Boys grades 6 & 7, OHHS gym, 10:30-12:00; Girls grades 4-8, OHJHS gym, 9:30-12:00. Call 743-7184 for more details.

## SPECIALS


**READING HOURS:** Norway Memorial Library, Mon. 11:00-11:30 for children over the age of 3; Welfare Center, Whitman St., Norway, Saturdays 3 p.m. Stories, singing, crafts; Ricker Memorial Library, Poland, Thurs. 10-11 a.m. for preschoolers.

**MEMBERSHIP DRIVE:** Freeland Holmes Library, Oxford. Friends of Library will be canvassing for new members; Any amount will buy a membership, \$10 will get a bookplate in the book of one choice; mail contributions to Membership Chairman, c/o Library, Oxford, ME 04270.



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...Page 13

come into the state. A man named Turner run it. There was no mernargerie. 'Twas just a ring show. A woman and a little boy rode a horse and tumbled more or less and jumped through hoops. But the pad on the horse's back was about as big over as the top of a center table. They couldn't have fell off if they had tried. But we all thought it was a great show.

"The price of admission to the pit was 12½ cents. That allowed you to stand up. Just before the show commenced, a fellow would get up and tell those in the pit that for 13 cents more they could set on the pier. Most of them would pay the extra price for they would be tired of standing already.

"The next show that came along was the old Amburg circus and menagerie. That was 50 years ago. I went to that, too. They had an elephant and such-like. The best thing in the show was the act that Luke Rivers did.

---

**"One of our strong attractions was the giant South American Cockatoo...Ezra had taken a white leghorn pullet and colored her plumage and stuck a topknot of long feathers on her head. Oh, she was a wonder..."**

---

Perhaps some of the older folks may remember him.

"While a slick feller in tights would be riding around the ring bareback, a countryman would come tumbling over the ropes, evidently hot as a cannon. He fell down on his face and then got up and fell down again. Usually some of the local officers would rush up to arrest him. But the show folks always interfered. They'd say let him alone and we'll have some fun with him.

"I can ride jest as well's the next feller can, by gravy," Luke would say, taking off his countryman's hat and slamming it on the ground. 'I can ride that hoss, got blast ye, and I'll bet a pint o'rum I can do it. They don't any of yer dast to take me up.'

"Finally someone would help him on. He would ride wobbly fashion for about a rod and then fall off and grab the horse's tail as he fell. The horse was trained so as not to kick him. He would be dragged around the ring three or four times and then would let go and fall over himself against the embankment. 'Put me on jest once more,' Luke would say. 'Jest let me try it once more. I've rid the old gray mare down on the farm and I can ride this hoss and I know I can.'

"The crowd would be hollering, 'Put him out and let the show go on.' But bless your soul the show was a-going on. I guess the people thought it was going on when Luke would be boosted on the hoss once more. He would stand up and hurrah. Then he pulled off one of his long-legged boots with the horse going full speed and flam it into the crowd. A second later the other boot would follow. Then he pulled a string and off would come his whole suit of clothes. There he was dressed in tights all a-spangle.

"Say, I got into the show business in a sort of a funny way. I was put in keeper of a show that got stranded down to Paris. The feller didn't seem to be able to run the thing any longer and I grabbed in where he left off. There was a bear and such-like and I did a first-rate job with it.

"And I've been in the show business pretty much ever since.

"Where have I been? All over the lot. And

I've showed in about all the good-sized towns of the northeastern states. I've been in the lake states and in California and all about and I've had every kind of a show, from a buffalo under a small tent to a one-ring circus with 90 people. And I made a dollar, too," suggested Ezra, while a shrewd twinkle came into his eye. "Most of the time I did my own door work and they did say that I was about as good a spieler as there was on the joshing circuit."

John Rivers, the improvident Bohemian, who lived for many months on the bounty of Ezra, used to set "the old man" up in great style when he got to telling of the old days on the road in Maine.

John Rivers, so Ezra said, was educated for a lawyer, but rum got the better of him. But he was a good man on the door, too. "Those were the palmy days," said John. "Stock in trade was a brown bear. Guess she didn't have any teeth, but Ezra knew how to work her. He'd have the whole tent full of people nerved up when he would punch her with an iron bar and jump back and holler, 'Look out, she's going to bite!'

"One of our strong attractions was the

Page 42...

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# Barn Swallows

by David Carew

**"There's lots of things that can't be helped in this world.  
But you'll suffer for 'em just the same..."**

I went out to the corn field early that morning. It was a bright dawn, sure to turn into a real scorcher later. Papa was already in the field working and I could see him clearly in his jeans and sun hat as he bent and straightened, bent and straightened.

"Mornin', Papa!" I called to him in pre-adolescent pitch.

"Bring me that hoe, Roy," he said in his soft, manly drawl. "We got a big day o'chores today, son." He went back to his work.

Sure enough, the day turned oppressively hot and muggy beneath a flaming sun. Papa weeded, planted some more rows of corn, transplanted pepper plants and then, toward the end of the day, drove the tractor around a new section of the corn field. I did what I could for him, but I was small and still a bit fragile after an illness the previous winter. Mama always admonished Papa not to work me too hard, so he always pretended I was

doing more for him than I was, and he always let me go off swimming with the other boys if it got too hot.

That day I stayed with Papa all morning and right to the end of the chores, at five-thirty. I was proud of myself for sticking through the day, and Papa gave me a lot of little smiles during the afternoon to let me know he was just as proud.

Finally Mama called us to supper. My job was to gather up the tools we'd used that day and bring them into the barn, stacking them neatly there, and cleaning any that needed it. I came up to the barn, my arms full of hoes, rakes, and seed bags. As I slid the barn door open, I heard from out of the rumble of the moving door a loud, death-like shriek. I looked above me to see birds circling up and around the rafters of the barn—small birds with forked tails. I dropped the tools and ran to tell Papa.





"Must be swallows, barn swallows, Roy. Got the same problem with 'em every year." He walked purposefully toward the barn, and I ran to keep up with him. Inside the barn Papa stood, head bent upwards, pondering the circling birds overhead.

"They've made themselves a nest up on that rafter there. See up there, Roy?" I traced the path of his extended finger upward and saw a small, round mass of grass and mud sitting precariously on a rafter high above.

"We'll have to do something about it. Damn nuisance." As Papa turned and walked toward the house, I noticed tiny, almost imperceptible movements in the nest. I walked several feet backwards to try to discern what it was causing these shadowy movements. Suddenly it struck me.

"Babies," I said under my breath. "Those are swallow babies." I remained staring up at the clump on the rafter until Mama called me in for supper. I walked out of the barn slowly, eyes still glued to the nest above.

At supper I couldn't help thinking of my discovery. I wondered if Papa knew, and if the swallow babies would alter his plan to get rid of the nest. Mama finally took exception to my silence at the table.

"Is something the matter, son?" she asked softly. "You look kind of perplexed about something. Maybe you're just tired from that hard day's work."

"Yes'm, I guess that's it...I...Papa, there's babies in that nest!" I burst out.

Papa looked up seriously over the steam from his food. He looked back down and took a mouthful.

"Now, we can't be worrying about that, Roy. Them barn swallows are pests and we gotta get rid of them. Can't be worrying about their young ones. They'll just grow up to be big barn swallows, and swallows are nuisances. First thing tomorrow we get rid of that nest, and any other nests that might be up there with it."

True to his word, Papa rose at five o'clock the next morning, bent on destroying the nest. He put on his work boots, his denim jacket, and he strode into the barn. I followed him, like someone about to witness a hanging. Papa went to the corner of the barn where the tools were stacked and grabbed a long pole with a small, lethal hook at its end. The implement of destruction.

Papa climbed the ladder to the loft as I held the pole for him. When he maneuvered to a spot directly beneath the nest, he motioned

to me and said, "O.K., Roy, now hand it up back-end-to, so I don't grab that hook."

"Yes, Papa," I replied, though it was awfully difficult for one as small as me to lift that long, awkward pole to him. Finally I managed to direct it to his outstretched hand.

As the thin pole moved slowly up toward the nest, like a snake about to devour its victim, the barn suddenly came to life with the high-pitched screams of the swallows. They circled all around the nest, sometimes lighting for a second, then swiftly departing. When they sensed Papa's purpose, they began diving at him. They charged him swiftly, darting away at the last second, only to circle and return moments later. Papa gritted his teeth and tried to make it appear the birds weren't bothering him at all. It was clear they were. Suddenly, wrathfully, he threw the pole away.

"Damn birds!" he choked out, huskily.

"Are you all right, Papa?" I asked. "I think those birds are really just frightened."

"Did you see it peck my face?!" Papa screamed so violently that I involuntarily cowered.

"No, Papa..."

"Well, look here, and don't be telling me how hard it is for them birds." He turned the left side of his face to me and I saw a small gash on his cheekbone, from which blood oozed in two diverging streams.

Mama was understanding and patient, though when Papa called them "damn birds," she hushed him angrily. She didn't want me talking like that, so Papa only did—or meant to—out of her presence. She swabbed his gash with Witch Hazel and he silently grimaced.

"Oh, for heaven's sake, George. You'd think I was slitting your throat. Just hold still for a moment longer." She feigned irritation, but when she turned her back to Papa I saw the trace of a bemused smile. She turned back to him.

"I don't see what you have against those swallows, George. Aside from their divings, they're not bothering anybody. They're just trying to raise a family in a warm, sheltered place. Not much different from yourself in that respect."

Papa looked up with irritation at her analogy. "Them birds have got to go, Anne. I don't know how I'll do it without being killed in the process, but I swear I will." Then he fell silent as the Witch Hazel stung in his gash.

After Mama was sure the wound was

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treated and well covered. She let Papa go about his business. He did a lot of grumbling (but never said "Damn birds") and set out for the corn field in back of the barn. I trotted out behind him.

"Papa," I called to him, gingerly feeling out the degree of his wrath. He looked up at me over his hoe.

"Papa, I think Mama might be right about the birds. They're not really doing us any harm. Can't we just let 'em be?"

Papa replied in a soft, terse voice, "Look, I said them birds was going and I'm gonna see to it. They leave their dung all over the whole place, over the tractor and my tools..."

"But they can't help that, Papa..."

"There's a lot of things that can't be helped in this world. But you'll suffer for 'em just the same. Them birds are goin'." He grabbed the hoe and began weeding between the rows of corn. I got down on all fours and began pulling weeds from about the stalks.

We worked that day under another burning sun. Every so often, Papa would pause in his work to throw a disparaging look in the direction of the sun. It was deathly hot and we needed rain badly. I knew that the possibility of a drought was contributing to Papa's irritability over the swallows.

When at last the day's work was over, Papa walked from the fields into the barn. He shot a menacing glance toward the rafters above, but then just walked into the house. I heard him talk to Mama as he washed up for supper.

"Anne, them stalks need rain. Hasn't been a drop in almost two weeks and the radio says it might be another week before we see any. I'm fearful for the crop. Roy and I try to put the hose water on them, but it's just not the same as a good healthy downpour. Most of the crops will fail if we don't get some kind of relief soon." I heard his facecloth splash into the sink, then the wringing out. I wondered if he had forgotten the birds.

The next morning Papa and I were once again in the fields at dawn. I was weary; partly from the labor of the past few days, but mostly from worrying over the fate of the birds. Papa seemed tired himself. He slowly walked about the stalks and glared over at me as I stood lost in thought.

"Quit your idling, son. Got to keep your mind on your work. When I looked over at you just now you were a thousand miles away. That ain't helpin' me, boy." I felt his

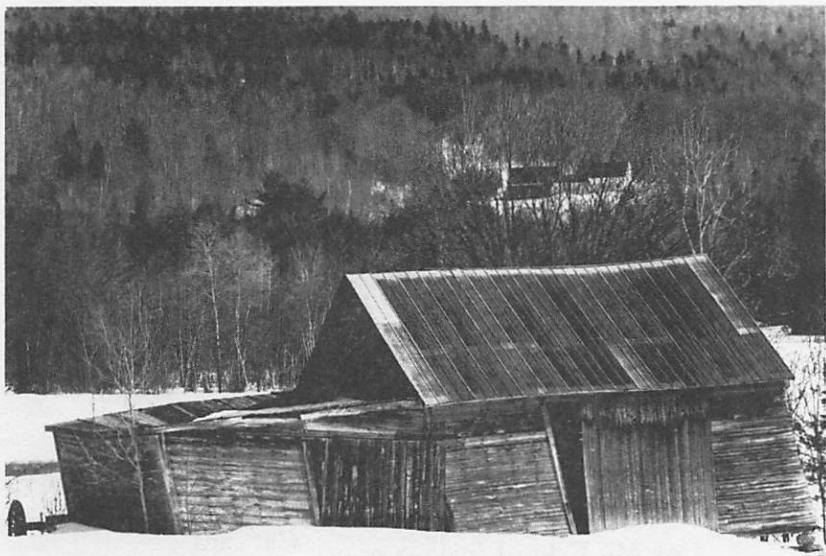


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hard eyes on me as I got back to my work. "Go gather up the hose from aside the barn," he said after a time. "We'll try to get some water on this corn before the sun gets too high in the sky. Drag the hose up slowly so you don't catch it on something and bust it."

"Yes, Papa," I said, and ran toward the barn.

As I was bending over the raveled hose by the barn, a horn blared out. I looked up to see Josiah Ferguson coming up the drive in his rickety old pick-up. He drove up to the house quickly and stopped short.

"Your Daddy home, Roy?" he called from inside the cab.

"Out in the corn field!" I shouted above his engine, and pointed.

As I was gathering up the hose, freeing it of its kinks, I noticed a lot of strange paraphernalia in the back of Josiah's truck. Laying directly in the back of the cab were a pair of gloves, a helmet that looked like something out of King Arthur, and several poles and cans filled with I-knew-not-what. The birds, I thought. He's here to kill the birds. Papa's called him to kill the birds.

As I approached the corn field, I heard Josiah's happy-go-lucky tenor ringing out above the stalks.

"...an' you shoulda just seen them swallows dippin' and divin' at me an' all the time I'm in my helmet just laughin' at 'em. Got rid o' fourteen nests that afternoon alone, George. Easy as candy from a baby. Up at Auntie's, on the hill, why they just..."

"What's your price, boy?" Papa said sharply. Josiah blushed at Papa's obvious distaste for his stories, then answered, "\$2.75 an hour, George."


"Fine. Now, start in right now and don't leave 'til every one of them damn nests is gone, and for good." Josiah nodded meekly and went back to his truck.

Papa and I worked on and on. All the while I thought of the swallows, grieving at their fate, trying to rationalize the situation. It was dreadfully hot. We worked until the pulsating blood in our veins turned our faces the color of the tomatoes we labored over.

There was no sign of rain at all. The sky was a torrid, brutal blue. Papa watered the crops, his sweat mingling with the water before both fell upon our crops. Suddenly there came a call from the direction of the barn. A strange knight waved to us.

"Done, George!"

All the rest of that day and into the night I



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thought of the birds. Ineffable thoughts. A comic little nest had perched like Charlie Chaplin's derby on a rafter in our barn. But Papa, my Papa, had snuffed them all out.

Something in me simmered, outrage like vapor emanating from the pit of my stomach to my brain and back again. I *loved* Papa, that much I could grasp as I fought to keep the tears back.

I went to my room with loathing and even there I was restless with the thoughts of the birds. Finally I crawled into bed and pulled the covers over my head.

The next morning at four I rose from my troubled sleep. I slipped silently into my cover-alls and walked barefoot out to the barn. I sent a forlorn glance up at the rafters, then took an uncomfortable seat on the woodpile.

Suddenly, I heard a small, faint chirp from above. I bent my head back and surveyed the entire area above me, walked down to the other end of the barn to look from a different angle. Nothing. Must have been a chipmunk in the loft. Then I heard it again—louder, this time, more distinct. Chirp! Ch-chirp!

Still nothing came into view, no motion, nor forked tail extending beyond a beam or rafter. Only the echo of the sound. Then only my own scuffing footsteps.

I heard Papa outside, walking up to the barn. The door groaned as he slid it open to find me unexpectedly inside, staring at him.

"Why...?"

"There's...some chirpin' Papa, I..."

Suddenly, something fell to earth from the rafters above. A soft, black mass. Papa bent over the thing, obscuring it from my view.

"Papa, is he...what's wrong with him...?" My question hit him like a knife. A violent shudder ran through him. He looked up at me, tears streaming down his face. On the ground beneath him lay the barn swallow, a worm struggling to be free of its beak.



*David Carew, who lives in Casco, has been a contributor of poetry to BitterSweet over the past few months.*

## ...Page 36

giant South American Cockatoo. That was certainly a wonder. I feel safe in saying that there was no other South American Cockatoo of that description in the whole world. Ezra had taken a white leghorn pullet and colored her plumage and stuck a top-knot of long feathers on her head. Oh, she was a wonder.

"Another attraction was a horse with his head where his tail ought to be. Great chance to expetiate on that at the door. Ezra used to wake 'em up on that and I would give 'em the best in my vocabulary. When Josh went in he found a horse backed into a stall. But tell? Not on your life. He'd go out and advise his friends to come in, too.

Our infant anacaonda was a great car. What was he? Why, an angleworm in a glass bottle. Josh would look him over and say that he expected to see a bigger one. Ezra would answer that he could see the big ones in almost any of the shows. But that an infant anacaonda was a real curiosity. And if Josh wasn't satisfied, Ezra said that he could wait until it grew. There would be no extra charge.

"One time we had to almost stop the show. Had a lemonade stand at the door, you know, we lost the lemon that we carried over since the season opened. Had to buy another one. Was a great set-back. The same piece of ice lasted us through the summer. How was that? Well, it wasn't ice at all, 'twas a square hunk of glass. But we clinked it against the side of the jar and imagination did the rest.

"Oh, those were the days when it was worth any man's time to be in the show business. But now? Why, there ain't no real fun on the circuit. I don't blame Ezra for getting out with his pile and having fun fox-hunting for the rest of his days. I haven't told half the things we had for the 'peop' in those days. Why, I could make your ears flop."

The circumstances of Mr. Stephens' death were distressing. He and Wallace Bisbee, a stock buyer stopping at the hotel, and several other men had been drinking more or less liquor since the 4th of July. Most of the drinking was done in the back part of Stephens' store, where he was accustomed to mix somewhat curious doses for himself and friends. The impression around town is that on this occasion he must have made a mistake and used wood alcohol instead of the true spirit in mixing up some compound of

sugar, water and liquor. At any rate, he and Bisbee and one or two others drank of the mixture. In the night, Mr. Stephens was taken suddenly and violently ill. A physician was summoned but he died at 11 o'clock Thursday night. Bisbee, who was at the hotel, lived until about 5 in the morning and died just as the physician arrived.

Mr. Stephens, at the time of his death, had in his barns in this place most of the circus equipment with which he used to travel through the state: the band wagon, the gilded cages, the vans, tents, and all the other appurtenances of a circus.

After a period of rest in Bryant's Pond, he was getting ready to take to the road again when he lost one of his children, a boy on whom he set great store, and who was to have gone with him. He said that this took all the heart out of him.



*The above story was copied—and edited by us only slightly—from the story "Old Times In Woodstock," written in 1899 and 1900 by Jefferson C. Gallison, M.D. and printed in the **Advertiser-Democrat**. The feature's 28 installments were copied and printed in book form in 1976 by Ruby Emery of Bryant Pond, who submitted the material to **BitterSweet**.*

*"The stories could have been rewritten but I didn't think that they could be improved," wrote Mrs. Emery. "I like interesting stories but I like the true facts. In rewriting, many of the facts are stretched, giving more untrue facts for the next author to enlarge upon."*

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# Folk Tales

## ARTHUR SANDERSON OF SOUTH WATERFORD

If age, charm and a sharp wit are characteristics of a true champion, then Arthur Sanderson of South Waterford qualifies as a legend in his own time.

The retired farmer and former mail carrier doesn't hold the world's shot-put record nor is he expected to compete at Wimbledon this year. But, at age 98, Waterford's oldest citizen has established a strong reputation as the town's Scrabble King.

During the frigid winter months, Arthur is a guest of Oscar and Mary Andrews at the Bear Mountain House just up the road from his home. The guest house provides an ideal setting for him to entertain all challengers in the popular word game.

Arthur admits that he is a relative newcomer to the game, having taken it up late in life, nearly two decades ago while in his early 80's. But he has acquired a great deal of proficiency in "keeping his hand in" and playing often.

Because of his well-known love for the game, his grand-niece and nephew presented him with a "Deluxe Scrabble Game" on his 98th birthday, last Sept. 17.

His style of play is rapid and he is unrelenting on his opponent. Even before his rival's letters are placed and counted, he is positioned and ready to fit his pieces onto the board and score points.

With determination and sharp play, an occasional game can be taken from him, but attempts to win two out of three or three out of five almost always end in disappointment for his opponent.

Arthur also keeps busy with puzzles (he owns more than 50) and he reads with a passion. Since the 300-page Waterford history was published in 1977, he has been South Waterford's leading salesman, distributing 67 copies of the volume which spans the 100-year period from 1875 to 1976.

For the past decade, Arthur has been the proud holder of the Boston Post Cane given by selectmen to the town's oldest citizen. His membership in the elite club has given him

occasion to meet with other seniors in neighboring towns.

"I know the woman that has the cane in Bridgton, the man in Harrison, the man in Norway, and the woman in Paris," he boasts. "Not any of 'em are as old as I am."

This year marks the third winter he has spent with Oscar and Mary Andrews and the year-round Bear Mountain House lodge beside the pond of the same name. He enjoys their company, the prepared meals and visitors' comings and goings.

But icy roads and heavy snows preclude his walking around town, an activity he sorely misses. During the warmer months he can regularly be seen strolling to the post office from his home along City Brook. If on a given day he doesn't appear, friends and relatives rapidly descend on his house to see if everything is all right.

Admittedly, there are some days Arthur doesn't feel up to venturing out. "Some mornings when I get up I feel kind of old," he says. "But I usually get over it," he adds with a chuckle.

Although he hates to admit it, his age has slowed him down some. This summer, for the first time, he enlisted the help of one of his many youthful relatives to mow his lawn. But he still rakes his own leaves and tends his house.

During some of the early snowstorms of 1978, Arthur would don his winter apparel and shovel out his walkway. As winter progressed, however, the chore became less enticing.

"I can still handle the small storms but the big ones kind of get to me," he quips.

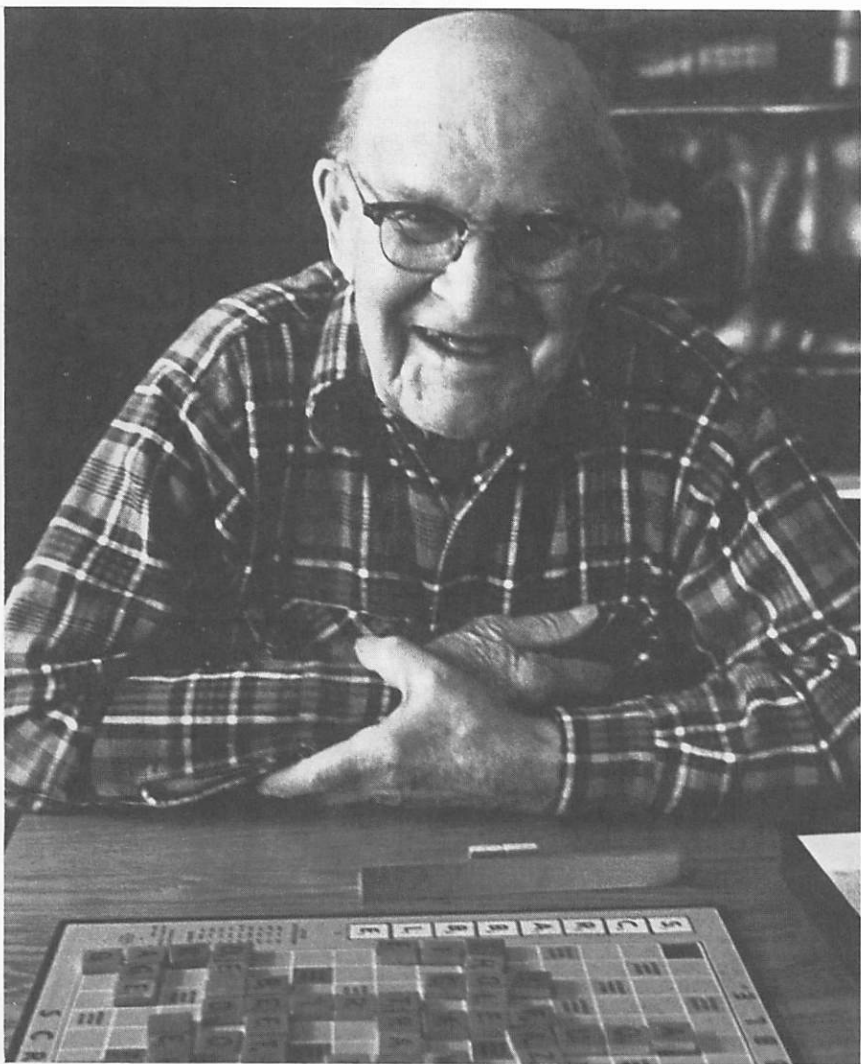
He still attends church, as well as Bear Mountain Grange No. 62, an organization he has been a member of for 75 years. He joined at age 23 in 1904 and remembers well the days when the Grange operated its own store.

He also recalls that when the Grange celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1974, it established a record for having seven officers that were descendants of the original charter members.

On Wednesday nights when Beano is in session, Arthur can be found at the community club rooms of the Grange Hall, selling tickets.

His home along City Brook, where he has lived since moving to town in 1943 after farming in Harrison for 32 years, is situated in an area where more than a dozen mills

"Some mornings when I get up I feel kind of old," chuckles this lively nonagenarian, "but I usually get over it."



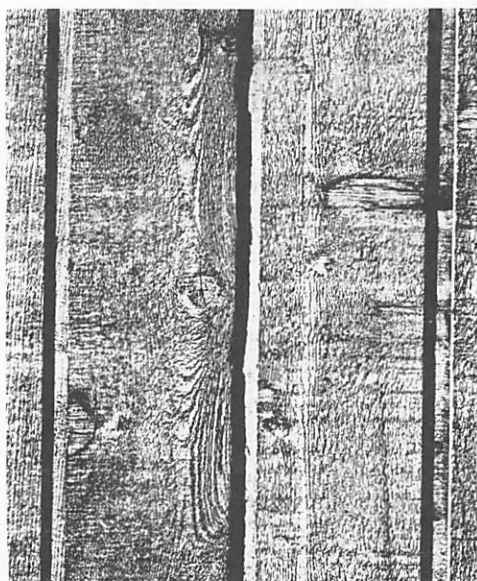
*"Uncle Arthur," as he is known to everyone in town.*

flourished during the industrial boom of the 1800's. Directly across the street is the site of the former Carding Mill, which has been moved to Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts and restored to full operating condition.

The building, one of two from Maine in the historical village at Sturbridge, was built

in 1810 by Oliver Hapgood as a wool-carding mill. After four other owners, W. K. Hamlin (father of Arthur's late wife, Jane Hamlin Sanderson) bought it in 1887. He later passed it on to his son Albert Hamlin, Jr., who operated it by carding batts for puffs instead of rolls of yarn until he abandoned the operation in the 1950's for health

# Real Estate



reasons.

The building and its equipment, which will remain forever a credit and reminder of the town's industry, was able to be moved because of a generous \$100,000 donation by Albert Rice of Waterford and Worcester, Mass.

Arthur followed closely the dismantling of the structure and its final departure for Sturbridge during the summer of 1963. Four years later he was among more than a dozen Waterford citizens who traveled to Sturbridge Village for the mill's dedication.

The only sign of the mill still remaining in town today is a small plaque located on the site. But for Arthur, the activities surrounding its operation and move seem like they happened only yesterday.

If you want to talk about the old place, play a game or two of scrabble and pass the time of day, Waterford's oldest and most beloved citizen is always ready.

*William H. Haynes*

*Haynes, a journalist for the Portland Press Herald, is one of Sanderson's "many youthful relatives" in South Waterford.*

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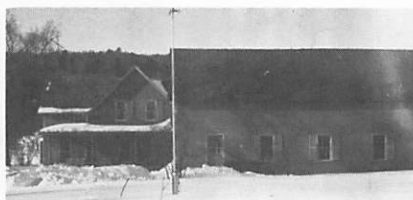
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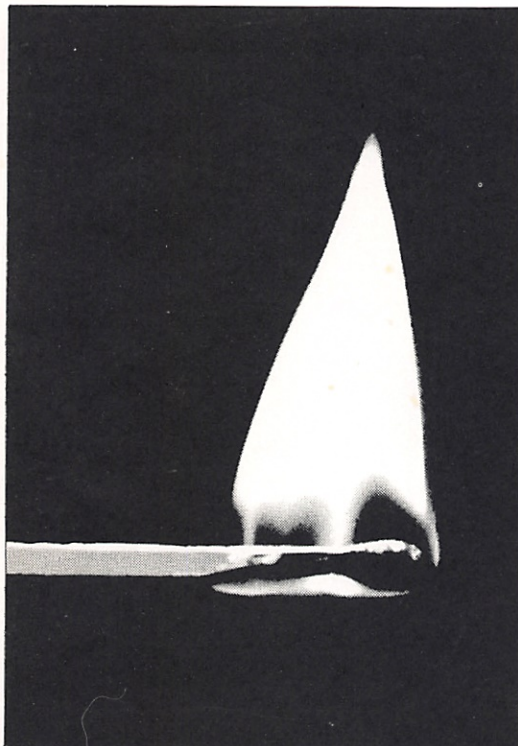
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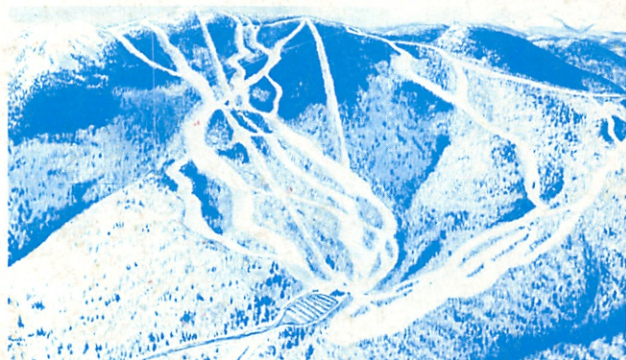
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